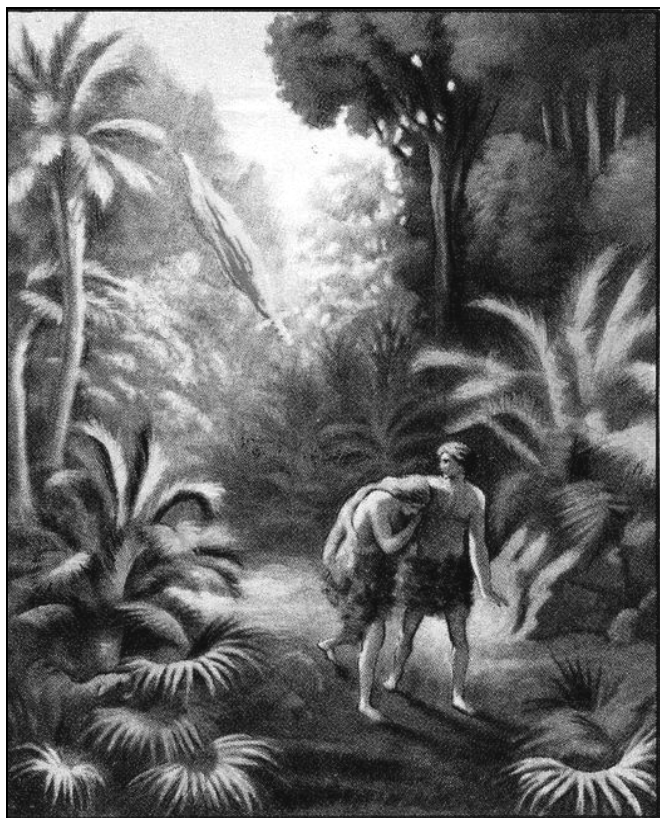


# The Sword AND Staff

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

## *The Awfulness of Sin*



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

**WE ARE LIVING** in dangerous times of moral uncertainty. Ancient land marks have been removed. Hostile modern philosophies, embedded in unbelief, have flooded the land and permeated our society. One of these philosophies is Relativism. Relativism would look upon nothing as being absolute. In such a context, modern man's mindset is becoming more and more amoral, and basic concepts of morality are fast eroding. Then when the moral is no longer a factor, being replaced by the amoral, the immoral soon fills the vacuum (the flesh always prevails if left unrestrained). There is no longer a conscience

really sensitive about right and wrong. There is no prodding of guilt. We have forgotten how to blush. The thought of sin being sin, let alone being awful, is little regarded. It has been said that some politicians can't tell the truth and others can't tell the difference. Many today are like the adulterous woman we read about in Proverbs 30:20, "Such is the way of an adulterous woman; she eateth, and wipeth her mouth, and saith, I have done no wickedness." (That is how lightly she regards what she has done in being immoral). And if we would point out the evils of sexual sins, including homosexuality, we are called "mean spirited" and that we are judging. With some, the awfulness of sin has long been forgotten.

And the sad part about this is that relativism has found its way into that which is called the "church." The situation in so-called Christendom today is almost a total disaster as far as recognizing the awfulness of sin is concerned. Starting with God (the very foundation on which all morality rests), and then looking across the whole spectrum of sins, the appalling nature of sin is being downplayed (if not totally denied; we must not highlight the negative). But when our faith wavers in reference to God, Christ and the Scriptures, our convictions about right and wrong go out the window.

We are fearful that many who claim to be New Testament Christians are not aware that they have fallen victim to a casual regard for right and wrong. They do not really think about how terrible sin is. They actually may dabble in overt sin, as well as in questionable things, saying that we all sin more or less; so, why worry about it. We are just human. In the pursuit of worldly pleasure, they may neglect the assembly. They may live day in and day out with sinners and never think in terms of them being lost.

(Continued on Page 4)

**THE SWORD AND STAFF**  
Post Office Box 147  
Mt. Airy, NC 27030 USA

E-Mail Address:  
[jamesgibbons@embarqmail.com](mailto:jamesgibbons@embarqmail.com)

Web Site Address:  
<http://jgibbons.8m.com>

■ **INFORMATION:** We are totally dependent upon your financial backing in the publication of this religious paper. To get on the mailing list, send a contribution. Subsidizing gifts are definitely needed along for us to continue this unselfish labor of love for God and truth. No notices are sent. We leave it entirely up to you to send a contribution to sustain us in this work. Make your checks out to CHURCH IN MOUNT AIRY. The extent (and frequency) of publication is determined by incoming support. James E. Gibbons is editor. (Money received for printed material is all considered as an offering). We do not assume responsibility for material from other sources and writers beyond that which appears in this paper. □

—THANK YOU—

## Proverbially **SPEAKING...**

*UNDER GRACE, sin is still sin;  
that is why grace is grace.*

The Lord came to save us from our sins (Matthew 1:21), not in our sins (Acts 26:18).

*Don't expect to get much out of life if  
you don't put much into it.*

The covers of a book are what we see, but more important is that which is in between.

*The reward of a thing well done is to  
have done it and done it well.*

"Loneliness" and "solitude" may refer to the same situation, but which one it is, is determined by us.

*If charity begins at home and just  
stays there, it goes nowhere.*

It can be said that "phileo" love is the love that comes with natural birth, and that "agapao" (agape) love is the love that comes with the new birth.

*A body ought to be busy, but not a  
busybody.*

The person who tells all he knows doesn't know all that much.

*When action is needed, patience is  
no longer a virtue.*

If you stay on top of things, it is hard for them to get you down.

# EDITORIAL COMMENTS



## THE DEVIL'S ASSAULT ON LIFE

**G**OD IS LIFE and the source of all life. He is called "the Father of spirits" (Hebrews 12:9; Numbers 16:22; 27:16). "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. The same was in the beginning with God. *All things were made by him; and without him was not any thing made that was made. In him was life...*" (John 1:1-4a). This life, at the end of the creation week, was conferred to man. Genesis 2:7 reads, "And the LORD God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils *the breath of life*; and man became *a living soul*." And this life was very special, as man was made in the likeness and image of God (1:26-27), which, no doubt, has reference to the spiritual side of man. Therewith, as the special object of God's favor, man, the highest form of God's creation on earth, was placed in the beautiful Garden home of Eden to live and to enjoy.

Now the devil becomes a part of the picture. We do not know the details of his expulsion from heaven, nor all that is involved, but he is for real. In the unlikely form of a serpent he plays upon the naivety of Eve. The devil knows that he cannot prevail against the Almighty God of Heaven, so his tactics are to get back at Him by leveling his assault against man, a lower form of God's creation made in the image of God. Since God is life, and the source of all life, his (the devil's) evil designs would best be accomplished by making an assault on human life (that life created especially in God's image). He therewith played upon the mind of Eve to eat of that forbidden tree in the midst of the Garden, and, lying, said, "Ye shall not surely die" (Genesis 3:4). But the wages of sin is death (Romans 6:23), and we know the rest of the story. Of the devil, the Lord Jesus said, "He was a murderer from the beginning, and abode not in the truth, because there is no truth in him...for he is a liar, and the father of it" (John 8:44). And it was not long until Cain killed his brother Abel (Genesis 4:1-12). John tells us of the moving spirit that was behind this awful deed, that "Cain, who was of the wicked one...slew his brother..." (1 John 3:12). Surely, the devil can be labeled "Apolylon," the destroyer (Revelation 9:11). And we correctly speak of him as "Satan," meaning adversary.

In our day and time, what seems to be the devil's most effective way to "mess up" life? There are many ways, but we would like to suggest that it is through our human sexuality, the means by which life itself comes into this world and is passed on. If he can disrupt this process, he can work havoc "big time." Life, as well as the very sanctity of life itself, will be destroyed.

We read, “God created man in his own image...*male* and *female* created he them” (Genesis 1:27). Then as they came together as man and wife, the writer Moses sums it up well by saying, “Therefore shall a man leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave unto his wife: and they shall be one flesh” (Genesis 2:24). God instituted marriage and brought the family unit into being, and from this base it was his plan that the proliferation and ongoing of life would take place (Genesis 1:28). So, it is no marvel when we see the devil making marriage, the family and human sexuality primary targets in his assault on life.

As we think of how the wicked one today is diabolically and desperately carrying out his scheme of death in targeting the very genesis of life, human sexuality, a whole array of alarming words flash across our mind: **“Playboy”** (This ungodly philosophy of the unrestrained life prevails today); **“Premarital Sex”** (Engaging in that intimate relationship that God has assigned to marriage, Hebrews 13:4); **“Living Together”** (And without being married—very common today, and without shame!); **“Illegitimacy”** (We are told that well over one-third of births are outside of wedlock); **“Divorce”** (It is said that over half of marriages end in divorce); **“Abortion”** (53,310,843 unborn babies have been killed in this country in the 37 years following the Roe & Wade judicial decision); **“Pro-Choice”** (Meaning that a woman has the right to kill her unborn baby, if she doesn’t want it); **“Gay Rights”** (Putting the acceptance of the homosexual life-style in the same category as civil rights, although most states have laws, or have had such laws, that call homosexual practices sodomy and a crime against nature—remember Sodom and Gomorrah!); **“AIDS”** (An awful and fatal disease primarily associated with homosexual practices); **“Same Sex Marriage”** (Unthinkable, but a few states have already legally recognized this; remember, God made Adam and Eve, not Adam and Steve); **“Euthanasia”** (The act of killing or helping a person kill himself in a circumstance that is considered to be an act of mercy—such thoughts are now in circulation). The process of life is put in disarray. Death, physical and spiritual, prevails; and the cause of Satan advances.

Indeed, we are living in perilous times (perilous, morally speaking—2 Timothy 3:1-7, as well as physically speaking). With the decline of Christianity and Christian values, and with the onslaught of humanism, assault on life and the dignity of life confronts us at every turn. It is almost like our society is bent on self-destruction. Leaving God out of

the picture, men of pseudo academia, politicians and the judiciary have dismantled, or are in the process of dismantling, long standing and well established laws. It seems the media has largely fallen in line with this, seeking to brainwash the public. The gay agenda is “in your face.” Christian and family values are not what matters. What Paul wrote about the ancient Gentile world could well be said of modern man and the present generation: “Professing themselves to be wise, they became fools” (Romans 1:22). “Wherefore God also gave them up to uncleanness through the lusts of their own hearts, to dishonour their own bodies between themselves” (Romans 1:24). And in them doing this they would eventually be “receiving in themselves that recompense [penalty] of their error which was meet [was due]” (Romans 1:27). (Read all of Romans 1:22-32). Many times sin has its own judgment built right into the very act itself. Such sins and others prompted Paul to say “that they which commit such things are worthy of death, not only [that] do the same, but have pleasure in them [give approval of them] that do them.” □

(To reverse the somber and negative tone of this article, we suggest that you read 1 Timothy 2:3-6, and 1 Corinthians 6:9-11, and especially notice verse 11. Remember John 3:16). □

---

## WEIRD STATEMENTS (As Seen and Heard)!

- “Jesus had 2 DADS” (trying to justify adopting children in a homosexual situation).
- “It is all right to have a baby not being married—MARY did” (trying to justify having children out of wedlock, not being married). □

---

An unusual billboard in Toledo, Ohio!



Perhaps they should read Isaiah 5:20.

---

**PORNOGRAPHY:** From information gleaned on the internet, it is said that the pornography industry has larger revenues than Microsoft, Google, Amazon, eBay, Yahoo, Apple and Netflix combined, and every year America spends \$13.4 billion and the world spends \$96.7 billion on its porn habit. And, in view of that, read Hebrews 13:4 and Matthew 5:27-30. □

---

# *The Awfulness of Sin*

*(Continued from Page 1)*

Read the rest of this article as we attempt to show from the Bible just how awful sin really is. Then we personally challenge you to respond appropriately. Let us consider the awfulness of sin as seen in the following ways.

## **I. AS SEEN IN THE FALL OF MAN**

### **Adam and Eve (and Us)**

All of us know the story of Adam and Eve, and the fall of man. We read, “And the LORD God commanded the man, saying, Of every tree of the garden thou mayest freely eat: But of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it: for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die” (Genesis 2:16-17). This explicit law, singular and negative in nature (but for their well-being), was prefixed by the magnanimous provision, “Of every [other] tree of the garden thou mayest freely eat.” But, sadly, we know the rest of the story. This single law that was so plainly spoken and that was so unmistakably clear was broken. The devil deceived Eve into believing that they were being unduly disenfranchised by God. She could be like God. So “she took of the fruit thereof, and did eat, and gave also unto her husband with her; and he did eat” (Genesis 3:6). That very day Adam and Eve died spiritually (by disobedience, sin, which separated them from God), and consequently their very beings were engulfed in guilt. Then after many long, hard and toilsome years they died physically. The apostle Paul wrote that “as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned” (Romans 5:12). The human race became a degenerated and dying race. Sin is an awful thing.

### **“And He Died”**

The following chapters in the book of Genesis fully verify and accent what took place in the Garden of Eden with the fall of man. The dark shadow of death casts its long shade across these pages. Even before the physical death part of the sentence of Adam and Eve was fully carried out, they witness death firsthand in their immediate family, taking place in a most violent way (Genesis 4:1-12). We read of the line of patriarchs starting with Adam when men lived so long. They may have lived a long time back then, but in this listing of one person right after another, we are told, “And he died” (Genesis 5:5, 8, 11, 14, 17, 20, 27, 31, etc.). And with the wide-spread practice of sin, as time

went by, its decided impact can be seen in man not living as long. But regardless, ultimately “it is appointed unto men once to die...” (Hebrews 9:27). One Bible character right after another says, “I go the way of all the earth” (Joshua 23:14; 1 Kings 2:2). Throughout the Bible, we cannot look at the recorded genealogies without dealing with the subject of death. Sin is an awful thing.

### **Hardships and Death**

Needless to say, we live in a world of sin and death (and the accompanying hardships in living and leading up to death). Think of all of the countless numbers and masses of humanity that have ever lived upon the earth. With the exception of Enoch (Genesis 5:24) and Elijah (2 Kings 2:11), they all died. This earth is a graveyard. And the hardships experienced in living are all part of the equation of death. The apostle Paul said, “For we know that the whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain until now” (Romans 8:22). It was not fitting that imperfect man should live in a perfect environment. Subsequently, God had said to Adam, “Cursed is the ground for thy sake; in sorrow shalt thou eat of it all the days of thy life; Thorns also and thistles shall it bring forth to thee; and thou shalt eat the herb of the field; In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread, till thou return unto the ground; for out of it was thou taken: for dust thou art and unto dust shalt thou return” (Genesis 3:17b-19). How sobering. Sin is no light matter.

### **“The Wages of Sin” (One Sin)**

James in his epistle asserts, “Then when lust hath conceived, it bringeth forth sin: and sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth death” (James 1:15). Paul in one simple, yet profound, statement says that “the wages of sin is death...” (Romans 6:23). The word “sin” here is singular, one sin. That is all it takes to bring about its dreadful consequences. That is how bad sin is. This reference to one sin corresponds with Genesis 2:17 and 3:6. Life was forfeited by one act of disobedience on the part of Adam and Eve. They believed the devil’s lie. They accordingly sinned. They died and their posterity was given over to sin and inherited the penalty of death. Truly, sin must be awful in the sight of God, who is perfection and who says to man made in His image, “Be thou holy for I am holy.” God knows the awfulness of sin to a degree that we cannot know. Consequently, sin, being what it is, has far-reaching consequences of universal proportions, impacting all of mankind. Could anything be any more awful? Death coming to all of humanity because of one sin?





## II. AS SEEN IN THE OLD TESTAMENT LAW

### The Old Testament Law and The Conquest of the Promised Land

It seems that the Old Testament law served the purpose of showing the exceeding sinfulness and awfulness of sin. That's what Paul said about it in Romans 7:13, in the light of his own experience with sin. In conjunction with this, he likewise called that law the "law of sin and death" (Romans 8:2). The large number of Old Testament laws that carried the death penalty when broken, and the very conquest of the Promised Land itself by Israel, fits into this scheme of things.

#### "Old Testament" Judgment

Sometime after the fall of man, and toward the end of the line of the old patriarchs following Adam, God called Abraham from the land of his nativity to go to a land that he would show him. He promised him the land of Canaan, that he would make of him a great nation, and that finally through him all families of the earth would be blessed (Genesis 12:1-3; Acts 3:25-26). However, there would be an interlude of a few hundred years before the first part of this promise would actually take place (and then later the last). His posterity would spend something like 400 years down in the land of Egypt, being enslaved the latter part, and when the "iniquity of the Amorites" (also called "Cannanites") was full, he would bring them forth to the Promised Land. (Read Genesis 15:13-16). In

Israel's conquest of Canaan two things would be taking place: (1) They were God's executioners in bringing judgment upon these people whose "iniquity" was now "full." (They were now ripe for judgment). And in their judgment and extermination we see how bad sin really is in God's sight. The inhabitants of the land were put to the sword (Deuteronomy 7:1-2; 20:16-18). (Read the book of Joshua). This typified the very nature of the Old Testament religion itself (the "law of sin and death"). (2) By their conquest, they were coming into possession of the land that God had promised to Abraham and their forefathers (in which God's scheme of things ultimately would be fulfilled with the coming of the Savior).

#### The Awfulness of Sin Accented

Now let us get right at the heart of what we are trying to say. We believe that the Old Testament law itself was given with the express purpose of showing and accenting the awfulness and the exceeding sinfulness of sin, thereby making man feel guilty, unclean and dirty. (Even the ceremonial, non-moral laws that were given served this purpose). Imperfect man found himself incapable of keeping all of these laws (and one sin invalidated all of his righteousness). This was all calculated to make man feel guilty, to feel helpless, and to feel the need of cleansing (yes, to feel the need of a Savior). Paul seems to highlight these truths in the third chapter of Galatians. The law was an interposed element that needed to be explained (in view of God's promises to Abraham and the ultimate coming of Christ). How did it fit into God's plan? Paul asked the question, "Wherefore then serveth the law?" He went on to elaborate. "Wherefore the law was our schoolmaster [tutor] to bring us unto Christ..." The awfulness of sin made man cry out, "O wretched man that I am! Who shall deliver me from the body of this death?" (Romans 7:24). The New Testament has the answer to this question.

(Before moving on in this article, we would like to parenthetically comment on what we heard the president of the United States and others say, trying to discredit what the Bible said in condemning homosexual perversion. They equated this with the Old Testament ceremonial laws in its condemnation of sodomy, like the eating of shellfish [which the law condemned]. It was no more awful than eating shellfish, implying that we should not take what the Bible says seriously. We eat shellfish, so why condemn the practice of sodomy? They little

(Continued on Next Page)

# The Awfulness of Sin

(Continued from Previous Page)

knew that the ceremonial laws many times were typifying the spiritual in making man feel unclean, that sin was dirty, that it was awful, and that he was in need of a Savior.)

## The Law of Sin and Death (The Death Sentence Duplicated)

Since the fall of man, all have been living their lives under the sentence of death, but the Old Testament law called for capital punishment to be immediately carried out, not waiting until the end of a life span, in connection with an extensive catalog of sins. All of this highlighted the awfulness of the wrong committed. We list some of them.



● “And he that blasphemeth the name of the LORD, **he shall surely be put to death**, and all the congregation shall certainly stone him: as well the stranger, as he that is born in the land, when he blasphemeth the name of the LORD, shall be put to death” (Leviticus 24:16). (If this penalty were carried out today, our population would, no doubt, be greatly diminished!).

● “But the prophet, which shall presume to speak a word in my name, which I have not commanded him to speak, or that shall speak in the name of other gods, even **that prophet shall die**” (Deuteronomy 18:20).

● “Ye shall keep the Sabbath therefore; for it is holy unto you: **every one that defileth it shall surely be put to death**; for whosoever doeth any work therein, that soul shall be cut off from among his people” (Exodus 31:14).

● “And he that killeth any man **shall surely be put to death**” (Leviticus 24:17).

● “And he that stealeth [kidnap] a man, and selleth him, or if he be found in his hand, **he shall surely be put to death**” (Exodus 21:16).

● “And the man that committeth adultery with another man’s wife, even he that committeth adultery with his neighbor’s wife, **the adulterer and the adulteress shall surely be put to death**” (Leviticus 20:10).

● “If a man also lie with mankind [another man, sodomy], as he lieth with a woman, both of them have committed an abomination: **they shall surely be put to death**; their blood shall be upon them” (Leviticus 20:13).

● “And he that curseth his father, or his mother, **shall surely be put to death**” (Exodus 21:16). Curse here means to lightly esteem, vilify,

revile. God regards this as an awful offense.

The list goes on. Here we see the awfulness, yea, the exceeding sinfulness of sin. A double death sentence was, in essence, pronounced upon the offender (as he was already sentenced to die). But now he was immediately to die. The Old Testament is characterized as the “law of sin and death.” As we read it, this hits us in the face.

## Sin is Still as Awful

But, know for certain, sin still is just as bad as it has ever been in the sight of God, although the immediate death sentence is not carried out today. (There is a day of judgment coming with more eternal consequences). Paul in Romans 1:29-32 mentions many sins committed by men, then says that “they which commit such things are worthy of death...” The writer of Hebrews admonishes his readers, “Therefore we ought to give the more earnest heed to the things which we have heard, lest at any time we should let them slip. For if the word spoken by angels [the Old Testament law, Galatians 3:19] was steadfast, and every transgression and disobedience received a just recompense of reward; How shall we escape, if we neglect so great salvation?...” (Hebrews 2:1-3a). Before the most High and Holy God of heaven, sin is still an awful thing!

## III. AS SEEN IN THE CROSS OF CHRIST

### Seeing the Crucifixion

It was an awful thing that took place the day Jesus was crucified. It was so terrible that the gospel writers do not tell us the details of the actual crucifixion. We are told, “And they crucified him... And sitting down they watched him there” (Matthew 27:35a,36). Having done this awful thing, they sit down to watch him suffer and die (almost like being entertained). And he being totally innocent compounds the awfulness of what took place. But as we look at Jesus on the cross from our Christian perspective, we see more than the awfulness of one drastic deed. We see the awfulness of sin, *period* (the awfulness of all sin as such, and in every way). We see the awfulness of sin through the eyes of God who was taking these most drastic measures into his own hands to save mankind from the awfulness of sin and its awful consequences. In the climax of the carrying out of his scheme of things, Christ would drink the bitter cup for all of humanity, becoming sin for us, while momentarily experiencing separation from God the Father, who cannot look upon the pollution of sin, as he cried out, “My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?” (Matthew 27:46)

## Deity on An Old Rugged Cross



**(Sin Must Be Really Awful!)**

Yes, the cross of Christ highlights the awfulness of sin in the most dramatic and emphatic way. Sin is so bad and awful that God himself (the Supreme Being who created everything, who upholds it all with the word of his power, and in whom we live and move and have our being) became flesh and blood in the person of Jesus Christ to save us from its consequences. The apostle Paul said, "God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself...For he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him" (2 Corinthians 5:19-21). John, in the prologue of his gospel account, intriguingly writes, "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. The same was in the beginning with God. All things were made by him; and without him was not any thing made that was made" (John 1:1-3). Then we read these amazing words, "And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us..." (1:14a). Matthew's account, after telling us that Jesus would save his people from their sins (Matthew 1:21), further tells us that this one to be born of the virgin Mary was "Emmanuel, which being interpreted is, God with us" (Matthew 1:23b). Just think of that. In becoming flesh and blood he was eventually nailed to the old rugged cross. My sins and your sins put those nails in his hands. Sin must really be

awful for God to have allowed all of these horrible things to happen in the procurement of our salvation. Sin is awful. Let's never forget it.

### **"The Offence of the Cross"**

Read 1 Corinthians 1:18-31 to see how the world in that day looked upon, and still looks upon, the preaching of the cross, and what it meant to them (and to us) as Christians. Paul says here, "For the preaching of the cross is to them that perish foolishness; but unto us which are saved it is the power of God." God used crucifixion, which within itself was most awful, to emphasize the awfulness of sin and what was taking place with the crucifixion of Christ. Paul talked about the "*offence* of the cross" (Galatians 5:11). The Greek word here for "offence" is *skandalon*. It is also translated "stumbling block." In the original language, the idea seems to be a trap and entrapment. We get our English word "scandal" from this word. We understand that in more polite society back then, to engage in conversation about crucifixion was not the most acceptable subject. It was an awful thing, unpleasant and such talk would approach being scandalous. Only slaves and the worst kinds of criminals died in this way. Knowing this, the awfulness of sin is further underscored. Nonetheless, the apostle Paul said, "But God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world" (Galatians 6:14).

## **IV. AS SEEN IN THE DAMNATION OF A LOST SOUL**

### **The Most Dreadful and Awful Consequence of Sin**

We now come to the most dreadful and awful consequence of sin, the damnation of a lost soul. From our human perspective, this highlights the awfulness of sin like nothing else does or ever could do. Just think of it: HELL, a place of eternal fire (Matthew 18:8), a place of eternal suffering (Mark 9:48). It is forever, a land of no return. The modern mind, which exercises tolerance toward almost everything and anything (whether it is right or wrong), recoils at the very thought of such a place (and hesitates to believe in its reality).

### **"Everlasting Punishment" and "Life Eternal"**

There are many things about heaven and hell that we do not understand, but both equally are taught in the Scriptures. If we believe the Bible is God's Word, we are obliged to believe what it says on this subject. If we believe in one, heaven or hell, we are constrained to believe the other. The Lord Jesus taught about his return and the Day of

**(Continued on Next Page)**

# The Awfulness of Sin

(Continued from Previous Page)

Judgment. He likened the judgment to a shepherd separating his sheep from the goats (Matthew 25:31-46). To the ones on his right, who had acceptably followed him, he said, "Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world" (25:34). To those on the left, who had not done this, he said, "Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels" (25:41). And he sums it up in the last verse of this chapter by saying, "And these shall go away into **everlasting** punishment: but the righteous into life **eternal**" (25:46). The word in the Greek, **aionios**, translated "everlasting" in describing the punishment, is the same word, **anionios** that is rendered "eternal" with eternal life. Both, "everlasting punishment" and "life eternal," are taught here and both are equal in duration. If one is not eternal, the other is not. We may not understand all of the particulars involving heaven and hell, but the truth of this paragraph stands.



## A Parallel Scripture

The apostle Paul with parallel thoughts graphically sums it up in Romans 2:6-11, as he writes of "the day of wrath and revelation of the righteous judgment of God." "Who will render to every man according to his deeds: To them who by patient continuance in well doing seek for glory and honour and immortality, **eternal life**: But unto them that are contentious, and do not obey the truth, but obey unrighteousness, **indignation and wrath, tribulation and anguish**, upon every soul of man that doeth evil, of the Jew first, and also of the Gentile; But glory, honour, and peace, to every man that worketh good, to the Jew first, and also to the Gentile: For there is no respect of persons with God." This is expressed differently, but it is the same awesome truth. Truly, how awful, how heinous, how appalling sin must be to the most High God of Heaven, who is holy, who is perfection! It is awful beyond our comprehension.

## V. THE AWFULNESS OF SIN: *Ramifications, Implications and Applications*

### Making Application

Any way that you look at it, sin is an awful thing. What we have written here should emphatically impact this upon our minds. It is a sobering experience to stop and think about the awfulness of sin. Having done that, now let us notice more

personally some of the ways this somber awareness should impact our lives.

### It Should Make Us Want to Get Right With God

First, it should make us want to get right with the God who made us. In this being brought about, we must be personally convicted of the awfulness

(Continued on Page 10))

## BIBLE QUESTIONS

(Random Questions Over the Bible)

1. What are four occasions in the Bible when water was miraculously parted and man walked through on dry ground?
2. When was the manna stopped that God supplied the children of Israel in their Exodus from Egypt?
3. What finally happened to Balaam the false prophet who was hired by the king of Moab to curse the children of Israel?
4. Where was the body of Joseph buried in Canaan many years after his death when the children of Israel entered the Promised Land?
5. What two parts pertaining to animal did the Law not allow the Jews to eat?
6. Who in the Bible said, "No doubt but ye are the people, and wisdom shall die with you," and to whom was it said?
7. In the book of Proverbs what are the "six things... yea, seven" that is said the Lord hates and are an abomination to him?
8. Who in the Old Testament had a son that he named Mahershalahashbz?
9. What name does the apostle John use referring to Christ that is not used by any other New Testament writer?
10. Who wrote more of the New Testament Scriptures volume-wise than any other New Testament writer?
11. What are the only two miracles of Jesus that involve destruction?
12. At the end of what story of parable that Jesus gave did he say, "Go, and do thou likewise"?
13. Who is the only one of the disciples who is said to have believed that Christ was raised from the dead before he actually saw him in his resurrected body?
14. What verse could be said to be the key verse to the book of Acts?
15. What was Barnabas' name before the apostle "nick-named" him "Barnabas"?
16. What famous Jewish teacher of antiquity did Paul say that he had been a student of and taught by?
17. Where and what was a "beatitude" spoken by the Lord while he was here, but is not found in any of the four gospel accounts?
18. How were the Bereans "more noble than those in Thessalonica" in how they responded to the preaching of the gospel?
19. What does the epistle of Jude in the New Testament tell us about the death of Moses that is not found in the Old Testament Scriptures?
20. Where is the only place in the New Testament that the Old Testament exclamation of praise "Hallelujah [Alleluia]" is found?

(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 and bless you for THE SWORD AND STAFF. It is an excellent Bible-based publication."*

■ *"I've enjoyed reading THE SWORD AND STAFF. A friend sent me some bound volumes and I find them very encouraging and helpful. I'd like to do the same for a family member...Please send my family any bound volumes you have the most of. They are all good..."*

### ALABAMA:

■ *"I visit a lady in the nursing home who is 93 years old. I gave her a copy of POEMS OF THE SOUL AND PROVERBS. She has four sons. She wants a copy for each son. Could we have four copies of POEMS OF THE SOUL AND PROVERBS? As well, I would like another group [set] of the bound issues..."*

### TENNESSEE:

■ *"I appreciate the work that you all have done and are continuing to do. May the Lord continue to bless your labor in the kingdom. Thank you. I love you."*

### VIRGINIA:

■ *"Thank you, brother, for the good work you are doing for our God, and his Son Jesus Christ, in the spreading of the gospel, knowing that it is his power unto salvation. This little donation will help to reach out to those who are lost. Know that you and your wife are in our prayers daily..."*

■ *"Your work is inspiring and wonderful. I pray for your work and the inspiration it can give to many Christians seeking the TRUTH."*

*"Please send me a bound copy of 2009 and 2010 of THE SWORD AND STAFF."*

*"I will continue to support the work of Christ you are doing."*

■ *"Thank you for your great ministry. God bless!!"*

### WEST VIRGINIA:

■ *"I received the first two copies of THE SWORD AND STAFF and I loved them! You are true to God's Word! I thoroughly enjoyed the articles and have already used some of the material in my witnessing. May God continue to bless you! Enclosed is my check to help keep them coming."*

### PENNSYLVANIA:

■ *"Please accept this donation for your publication, THE SWORD AND STAFF. Thank you for continuing your hard work for the Lord."*

### OHIO:

■ *"I have just read my first SWORD AND STAFF, vol. 49 # 2 and really enjoyed it...I would like to get all of the volumes. I'm retired and living by myself and enjoy reading the Bible and feel this would help my understand it more. Thank you."*

■ *"I would just like to let you know how much we enjoy receiving THE SWORD AND STAFF. We have been receiving it for years. It has been a great blessing to us. May God bless and keep you always in his care so you can carry on this good work. Enclosed is a check to help..."*

### MICHIGAN:

■ *"I've given all the books [POEMS OF THE SOUL AND PROVERBS] away and I could use 50 more."*

*"Thank you for the work you are doing. May God help you to continue with it."*

■ *"Please find enclosed our offering for your work in spreading the truth of the Word of God to people all over the world! We have been enjoying your publication for many years and have been blessed by your publication."*

*"We have a weekly Bible study group that we would like to get acquainted with your material. We would appreciate two copies of each of the bound volumes of THE SWORD AND STAFF so that we can pass them out and then exchange them with one another so that everyone gets a chance to read your articles on the different very important issues."*

*"We are attaching a list of names and addresses... we would like you to add to your mailing list to receive THE SWORD AND STAFF on a regular basis. I know they will look forward to receiving them just as much as we do once they get to read them and study God's Word in a more in-depth manner. It is our prayer that they will, in turn, help to support your work financially and prayerfully."*

*"Thank you very much for your dedication and work to further our Lord's kingdom. May God bless you, your wife and those who help with printing and distribution of all your printed materials."*

**Continued on Next Page)**

## READERS'...Response

(Continued from Previous Page)

### ILLINOIS:

■ "Greetings in the Lord! Thank you so much for the many copies of *THE SWORD AND STAFF* I've received over the years. The materials are grounded in the Scriptures and have helped me in my ministry. Thank you!..."

### MISSOURI:

■ "Please find enclosed a contribution. Could you send me the 2009 and 2010 bound volumes of *THE SWORD AND STAFF*? Each copy is complete in content and so much needed today.

"I really believe, and it grieves me deeply, in too many places our churches have become the "wards of society." Perilous times have come (2 Timothy 3:1). Thanks be to God, He is still in control..."

■ "I recently came across volume 49, number 3, edition of *THE SWORD AND STAFF*. It is refreshing to find another publication that is Biblical. Since this material seems to be good solid Bible teaching, I will be able to use excerpts from this also for meditations, devotions and sermons...Thank you for speaking and publishing the truth. This is becoming less and less as the years go by. Enclosed is a check to help support your good work."

### NEBRASKA:

■ "You truly are a physician of Christ's teachings to the sin sick world! Thank you ever so much for your faithfulness in teaching. You definitely fulfill 1 Thessalonians 5:12b: "Who diligently labor among you and have charge over you in the Lord and give you instruction" (NASV). Please accept this [check] as I wish to complete my bound volumes library (1995-2010). Loose [copies] are OK, bound are superior!..."

■ "We received our copy of *THE SWORD AND STAFF* with the article, 'Why Did God Become Flesh in the Person of Jesus Christ?' We would like to have a dozen more copies of that paper...It has many wonderful articles in it. Keep up the good work."

■ "Thank you for sending the copies of *THE SWORD AND STAFF*. We greatly appreciate the stand you take on the church and the Bible plan. It's like a breath of fresh air. May God bless you for all the work you are doing for his service."

■ "Thank you so very much for your lessons. Oh that we had more teachers like you. Please accept my gift, tho small. God bless you, your wife and helpers."

### MONTANA:

■ "At my dad's house, I read an article you wrote entitled 'Why Did God Become Flesh in the Person of Jesus Christ?' It was excellent! The article covered all of the key facets of our Lord's coming in the flesh in a manner that was easy to understand. I loved the way that you allowed Scripture to speak, and then logically

followed those Scriptures to their conclusion. Please send me an issue of your next publication along with information as to how to subscribe to *THE SWORD AND STAFF*...Keep preaching and teaching the truth!"

### CALIFORNIA:

■ "Hi and good day. My name is \_\_\_\_\_ and I came from the Philippines. I have been a reader of *THE SWORD AND STAFF* since I was in Sunday school as a child. My dad has a lot of issues of your paper and I learned a lot from them, from the feature articles to Bible trivia, and from Bible trivia up to the illustrations. I'm really blessed from what I've learned from you and I used some of your material in our local church. But one day I asked my dad why his friend didn't send anymore copies of *THE SWORD AND STAFF*. And my dad told me that his friend moved to another place. I miss reading *THE SWORD AND STAFF*.

"Now I'm residing in California with my mom and just when I'm surfing the internet right now I saw your name and the website, and I found out that I can have a copy of *THE SWORD AND STAFF* and bound volumes. I was really excited to read again and to be able to have a copy of *THE SWORD AND STAFF*. Please send me a copy..." (E-Mail)

■ "...I want to say thank you for sending me volumes 47 and 48. I do learn a lot in *THE SWORD AND STAFF*, and I will use this and teach it in our young adults Bible study. I know that God will continually bless you because you are a blessing to others like many of us. And would you please send me bound volumes from 2003-2004...And also could you please put me on the mailing list."

### OREGON:

■ "Praise God for your faithful stand for God and His Word through the years—even during stressful health situations. God bless you..." □



## The Awfulness of Sin

(Continued from Page 8)

of sin, and our own sins in particular, or we can never be saved from them. "For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God" (Romans 3:23), and this "all" includes you, this writer, everyone. There is a Day of Judgment coming (Acts 17:31). We must believe that we are really lost before we can be genuinely converted and saved. (If I'm okay, and you're okay, how do we explain the cross of Christ? Why did he die on the old rugged cross? Why is he called the Savior?). The mission of the Holy Spirit fits in here. Jesus, that night before his crucifixion, said that when the Holy Spirit "is come, he will reprove [convince, convict] the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment: Of

sin, because they believe not in me; Of righteousness, because I go to my Father, and ye see me no more; Of judgment, because the prince of this world is judged.” On the day of Pentecost after his resurrection and the coming of the Holy Spirit (and in response to the preaching of the apostles), we read, “Now when they heard this, they were pricked in their heart, and said unto Peter and to the rest of the apostles, Men and brethren, what shall we do? Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost [Spirit]” (Acts 2:37-38). They were “pricked in their heart” as the Holy Spirit did his job through the sword of the Spirit, the Word of God, that was being preached (Ephesians 6:17; Hebrews 4:12). Throughout the book of Acts, we find this happening time and time again. Men were convicted of their sins and were moved to get right with God.

#### **It Should Make Us Appreciate and Love the Lord**

The apostle John said, “We love him, because he first loved us” (1 John 4:19). John 3:16 reads, “For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.” Just think what has taken place. “For he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him” (2 Corinthians 5:21). The grace of God enters the picture. Unless we believe in the awfulness of sin, and the consequent wrath of God involving it, the love of God will have little meaning to us. And the grace of God is completely meaningless, for why would grace be needed if sin were not all that bad? Consider Titus 3:2-7; Ephesians 2:1-10. “For the wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord” (Romans 6:23). “Thanks be unto God for his unspeakable gift” (2 Corinthians 9:15). Amen!

*When I survey the wondrous cross  
On which the Prince of glory died,  
My richest gain I count but loss,  
And pour contempt on all my pride.  
Forbid it, Lord, that I should boast,  
Save in the death of Christ my Lord;  
All the vain things that charm me most,  
I sacrifice them to His blood.  
See, from His head, His hands, His feet,  
Sorrow and love flow mingled down;  
Did e’er such love and sorrow meet,  
Or thorns compose so rich a crown?*

*Were the whole realm of nature mine,  
That were a present far too small;  
Love so amazing, so divine,  
Demands my soul, my life, my all.*

(And add to appreciation and love, a liberal dose of humility. We are all sinners [Romans 3:23], and we did not earn salvation [Ephesians 2:8-9]. There is no room for self-righteousness.)

#### **It Should Make Us Want to Be Godly and to Live Holy Lives**

Sin is awful, and grace is wonderful. But is grace a license to sin? Absolutely not. The apostle Paul having said that where sin did abound, grace did much more abound (Romans 5:20-21), goes on to make himself unmistakably clear, lest he be misunderstood. He rhetorically had asked a few questions, which he thereafter answers with other questions, “What shall we say then? Shall we continue in sin, that grace may abound? God forbid. How shall we, that are dead to sin, live any longer therein?” (Romans 6:1-2) Read the rest of this chapter in Romans. Also take note of what Paul wrote in Titus 2:11-12, “For the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men, teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world.” Christ came to save us from our sins, not in our sins (Matthew 1:21). Grace is a compelling motivation for godly living, not an alibi to remain in sin. It cushions us with forgiveness as we bounce back to continue in the paths of righteousness. Let us listen to the writer of the book of Hebrews as he admonishes and encourages his readers. “For we have not an high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin. Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in the time of need” (Hebrews 4:15-16).

#### **Don’t Dilly-Dally Around With Sin and Questionable Things**

Realizing the awfulness of sin, (it is the sting of death), we should not dilly-dally around with it and things of a questionable nature. Even Eve, before she believed the devil’s lie, was well aware of the danger of this. Initially she responded correctly to Satan’s concocted question: “We may eat of the fruit of [all] the [other] trees of the garden: But of the fruit of the tree which is in the midst of the garden, God hath said, Ye shall not eat of it, *neither shall ye touch it*, lest ye die” (Genesis 3:2-3). In the

(Continued on Next Page)

## The Awfulness of Sin

(Continued from Page 11)

same spirit, the apostle Paul had admonished the Corinthians, “Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and **touch not** the unclean thing; and I will receive you” (2 Corinthians 6:17). (Also read verses 14-18 of this chapter). As parallel thought, Hebrews 12:1 admonishes that we should “lay aside **every weight**, and the sin which doth so easily beset us.” Add to this the following Scriptures that amplify the truth of what Eve said. “And have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather reprove them” (Ephesians 5:11). “Abstain from all appearance of evil” (1 Thessalonians 5:22). And to cap it off, Paul further admonishes, “Abhor that which is evil; cleave to that which is good” (Romans 12:9). Let us take these Scriptures to heart.

### It Should Make Soul-Winners Out of All of Us.

As we close out this article, we make one more important application. The apostle Paul brought the 15<sup>th</sup> chapter of 1 Corinthians to a conclusion with these wonderful words: “Death is swallowed up in victory. O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory? The sting of death is sin; and the strength of sin is the law. But thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ. Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye steadfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord” (1 Corinthians 15:54b-58). And because of this we sing, “We have heard the joyful sound: Jesus saves! Jesus saves! Spread the tidings all around; Jesus saves! Jesus saves!” We have found the solution to the sin problem. Our lives are filled with purpose and hope. This should make soul-winners out of all of us. The Great Commission says to “preach the gospel [good news] to every creature. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned” Mark 16:15-16). Paul states in 2 Corinthians, “For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ; that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad,” and continuing, he says, “Knowing therefore the terror of the Lord, we persuade men...” (5:10-11a) and then, “For the love of Christ constraineth us; because we thus judge, that if one died for all, then were all dead” (5:14). And we have the answer to all of the ills brought on by sin.

The book of Revelation, drawing the Holy Scriptures to a close, leaves us with these reassuring words, “And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away” (Revelation 21:4), and then it extends this wonderful invitation, “And the Spirit and the bride say, Come. And let him that heareth say, Come. And let him that is athirst come. And whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely” (Revelation 22:17). Let us be doing this. □

### Love and Concern for Them

**I**N THIS DAY AND TIME too many churches in their interchurch “fellowship” constitute a network of compromise wherein “a rising tide lifts all boats,” thus impeding faithfulness to the Lord’s cause. In such a context it would be better for local churches to exercise their God-given independence as local autonomous entities, being found faithful to the Lord, and in the meantime simply maintaining a restrained relationship of love and concern to the churches at large. □

### Why People Don’t Understand the Bible

**THERE ARE** some simple reasons why people do not understand the Bible. Please consider the following carefully:

1. Lack of study. How can we understand that which we do not read and study? Study is hard work but study we must if we want to know God’s Word (2 Timothy 2:15).
2. Cares of this world choke the Word. We become so busy with the things of this world that we find no time for God’s Word. If we do study, then often we may not apply it to our lives because we are too busy with worldly things. We need to be more concerned with making a life (spiritual life that pleases God) than making a living (Matthew 13:22).
3. No desire for knowledge. Some simply do not care about God and His Word. They have no spiritual appetite (2 Peter 3:17-18). The eunuch in Acts 8 had a strong desire to know and understand the Word of God (Acts 8:30-31).
4. Many follow preachers, teachers and church leaders without investigating the Word for themselves (Matthew 15:14; Romans 16:17-18)
5. Some have closed minds (Matthew 13:15).
6. Others twist and corrupt the Word (2 Peter 3:16; 2 Corinthians 2:17).
7. Sadly there are some who have no love for truth (2 Thessalonians 2:10-11).
8. Some are living in willful ignorance (2 Peter 3:5)—*Leon Brashear*

## ***A Desperate Look at Life***

*Macbeth Act 5, scene 5, 19–28*

To-morrow, and to-morrow, and to-morrow,  
Creeps in this petty pace from day to day,  
To the last syllable of recorded time;  
And all our yesterdays have lighted fools  
The way to dusty death. Out, out, brief candle!  
Life's but a walking shadow, a poor player,  
That struts and frets his hour upon the stage,  
And then is heard no more. It is a tale  
Told by an idiot, full of sound and fury  
Signifying nothing.—**William Shakespeare**



## **BARBS** ...with a POINT

**LOST TIME** can never be found.

A gust of wind puts out a small flame, but it makes a big one burn even brighter.

*It is never too late to do what you ought to do.*

What if you do win the rat race? What is so great about that? You are still a rat.

*People who stand for nothing fall for anything.*

There is nothing more pitiful than an old sinner who has lived his life and hasn't learned how to live.

*Egotism involves a mistaken case of identity.*

When your convictions have gone down the drain, it won't be long until you will follow them.

*It is hard for angry people to be happy.*

Saying you are not a hypocrite does not lessen the wrong in which you are openly involved.

*Shallow people don't like to wade into deep water.*

It might be a mistake to do business with a man in the dark who says he is honest as the day is long.

*When we live and learn, we learn to live.*

When we don't have the best of everything, we just need to make the best of everything that we have.

*Before you start pointing your finger at others be sure that your finger nails are clean.*

A sterile, sectarian approach to the subject of the church and denominationalism can leave a person empty and void of spirituality.

*Men are punished for their sins (and, many times, by their sins).*

Knowledge is proud that he knows so much; wisdom is humble that he knows so little.

*"Watered down" Christianity has been diluted and thus rendered useless.*

If you have skeletons in your closet, better bury them in the waters of baptism so that you can get on with your life.

*The middle of the road is dangerous; you may be hit from both sides.*

If we serve the Lord a little, do we think that we will go to heaven a little (and then somewhere else the rest of the time)?

*Opportunities are more available for those who look for them.*

Once a church has compromised God's standards, like a train that has gotten off the tracks, it is hard to get it back on again.

*It is never right to do wrong, even if we pray about it.*

If all religions are right, then nobody is right (for they are contradictory) and there is no God of truth.

*If you think big and do little, life will be no more than a riddle.*

People who are always preoccupied with being in "style" will soon find themselves out of style with God.

*Any religion that inspires hatred and violence is not of God, for God is love (1 John 4:8,16).*

Many times where we are physically may be indicative of where we are spiritually (or have a bearing upon where we are spiritually).

*A wise person will keep his mouth shut and his ears open.*

If God is not our "common denominator" in life, life can become pretty common. □



## ***Hope Sustains Our Lives***

**H**OPE is usually described with such visual metaphors as a ray, a beam, a glimmer of hope; the break in the clouds; the light at the end of a dark tunnel. It is often discovered in unexpected places and in unexpected ways.

Life is full of a series of challenges that we must face. Although these challenges may seem impossible at times, they are probably there for a reason. The storm makes the tree strong. Or, in another figure, it is the sandpaper that makes the wood smooth. We need to help our children learn the value of hope very early and in all they do. It sustains and gives reason to the most difficult tasks.

No matter what sort of adversity or challenge we face, we can always believe that, with hope, it can be conquered and, in the end, we will be stronger for having faced it. Life goes on regardless of circumstances. Despair is not only the opposite of hope, it is the enemy of hope. Eliminate that. □





## *God Evident in The Palm of Your Hand*

**SIR ISAAC NEWTON** once said, “In the absence of any other proof, the thumb alone would convince me of God’s existence”...

In his book *Fearfully and Wonderfully Made*, Dr. Paul Brand, who was one of the foremost hand surgeons in the world, testifies to the wonder—the miracle—of the human body.

Dr. Brand explained that although many people think that fat serves no significant purpose, it does on the hand.

“Underneath the skin in the palm of the hand lie globules of fat with the look and consistency of tapioca pudding. Fat globules, so soft as to be almost fluid, cannot hold their own shape, and so they are surrounded by interwoven fibrils of collagen, like balloons caught in a supporting rope net...where stress occurs, such as on the palm of the hand, fat is tightly gathered and enveloped by fibrous tissue in a design resembling fine Belgian lace.”

When you grasp a hammer in the palm of your hand, each “cluster of fat cells changes its shape in response to the pressure. It yields but cannot be pushed aside because of the firm collagen fibers around it. The resulting tissue, constantly shifting and quivering, becomes compliant, fitting its shape and its stress points to the precise shape of the handle of the hammer. Engineers nearly shout when they analyze this amazing property, for they cannot design a material that so perfectly balances elasticity with viscosity.”

The skin of the hand is also well suited to the task of gripping and handling different kinds of objects.

Dr. Brand wrote, “If my skin tissue had been made harder, I might insensitively crush a goblet of fine crystal as I hold it in my hand; if softer, it would not allow a firm grip.”

The structure of human bones also reflects design.

“In 1867, an engineer demonstrated that the arrangement of bone cells forms the lightest structure, made of least material, to support the body’s weight. No one has successfully challenged his findings” (ibid.).

Although people take bone healing for granted, it is remarkable that “the skeleton is a growing organ. When I cut bone, it bleeds. Most amazing of all, when it breaks, it heals itself” (ibid.).

Another remarkable feature of a normal hand is its sensitivity. Dr. Brand states, “A normal hand can distinguish between a smooth plane of glass and one etched with lines only 1/2500 of an inch deep.” The

fingertips have the ability to detect a difference of just three milligrams.

How extraordinary it is that the hand should be so well-suited for its purpose through all of these amazing features and abilities. Was this the product of chance or the creation of God?

—Craig Beidler in *The Real Truth* publication, December 10, 2009 □

---



## *Redundant, But So True*

**WHAT** we are saying here is almost redundant as it is so obvious. But have you ever thought about it? It takes more effort to go up than it does to go down. Try climbing a mountain, or even going up the stairs. Then think of it in reference to going down. You hardly have to do anything to go down. In fact, you can slip, stumble and fall; then down you go. You fall down, not up. Contrariwise, considerable efforts and energy must be expended to go up and to continue to go up; going down, none.

Now transfer these thoughts to the realm of the spiritual. If we would go to heaven it is an upward journey. To go the other way is all down. Never forget this. The apostle Paul, having looked at initial obedience in baptism (Colossians 2:12), continued to say, “If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God” (Colossians 3:1). The apostle Peter’s admonition in 2 Peter 1:5-11 fits right in with what Paul said (and heeding it, we will eventually end up in heaven), “Giving all diligence, add to your faith virtue [moral courage]; and to virtue knowledge; And to knowledge temperance [self-control]; and to temperance patience [perseverance]; and to patience godliness; And to godliness brotherly kindness; and to brotherly kindness charity [love]. For if these things be in you, and abound, they make you that ye shall neither be barren nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. But he that lacketh these things is blind, and cannot see afar off, and hath forgotten that he was purged from his old sins. Wherefore the rather, brethren, give diligence to make your calling and election sure: for if ye do these things, ye shall never fall: For so an entrance shall be ministered unto you abundantly into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.” The word “diligence” stands out here. We put forth a decided effort, as we grow in the grace and knowledge of the Lord, thereby seeking and moving toward those things that are above. Peter definitely says that “if ye do these things, ye shall never fall.” However, Hebrews 2:3 asked this sobering question, which to ask is to answer, “How shall we escape, if we neglect so great salvation?” Let us keep going up. □

**Sometimes...**

Sometimes...

We must be hurt in order to grow;  
We must fail in order to know,  
We must lose in order to gain.  
  
Some lessons are learned best  
Only through pain.

Sometimes...

Our vision clears  
Only after our eyes are  
Washed with tears.

Sometimes...

We have to be broken,  
So we can be tender,  
Sick so we can rest and think better;  
On things more important  
Than work or fun;  
Trip near death,  
So we can assess how we've run.

Sometimes...

We have to suffer lack,  
So we can know Gods provision,  
Feel another's pain,  
So we can have a sense of mission.

So take heart, my friend,  
If you don't understand today,  
Instead of grumbling,  
Ask God what He means to say,  
In order to learn you must endure,  
And learn to see the bigger picture.

In order to grow, you must stand;  
Look beyond the hurt  
To God's loving hand  
That takes what is good,  
And gives what is best,

And on this blessed thought, rest:

As your anxious heart,  
With questions, waits,  
God's hand only gives  
What His loving heart dictates.

Sometimes the Lord calms the storm;  
Sometimes He lets the storm rage...  
And calms His child.

Better the storm with Christ...  
Than smooth waters without Him.

—Author Unknown

**LIPSTICK,  
Interesting Information**

**T**HROUGHOUT most of the 19th century the obvious use of cosmetics was not considered acceptable in Britain for respectable women, and it was associated with marginalized groups such as actresses and prostitutes. It was considered brazen and uncouth to wear makeup. In the 1850s, reports were being published warning women of the dangers of using lead and vermillion in cosmetics applied to the face. By the end of the 19th century, Guerlain, a French cosmetic company, began to manufacture lipstick. The first commercial lipstick had been invented in 1884, by perfumers in Paris, France. It was covered in silk paper and made from deer tallow, castor oil, and beeswax. Before then, lipstick had been created at home. Complete acceptance of the undisguised use of cosmetics in England appears to have arrived for the fashionable Londoner at least by 1921.—*Wikipedia, Online Encyclopedia* □



**Wide Selection of Materials**

**W**E HAVE a 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* □



**→ E-MAIL ADDRESS:**

jamesgibbons@embarqmail.com

**→ Web Site: <http://jgibbons.8m.com>**

**Answers to:**

**BIBLE QUESTIONS**

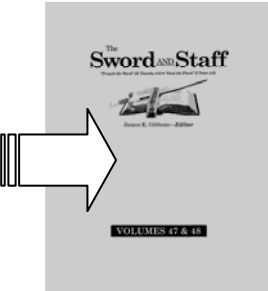
1. (1) Exodus 14:21-29; (2) Joshua 3:13-17; (3) 2 Kings 2:8; (4) 2 Kings 2:9-14; 2. Joshua 5:10-12; 3. Joshua 13:22; 4. Exodus 13:19; Joshua 24:32; 5. Leviticus 3:17; 7:23-25; 17:10-16;; 6. Job 12:2 (Job to his "friends"); 7. Proverbs 6:16-19; 8. Isaiah 8:1-4; 9. The Word (John 1:1,14; Revelation 19:13); 10. Luke (His writings constitute about 30% of the New Testament Scriptures); 11. Mark 5:1-13; 11:12-14,20-21; 12. Luke 10:25-37; 13. John 20:8; 14. Acts 1:8; 15. Acts 4:36; 16. Acts 22:3; 17. Acts 20:35; 18. Acts 17:10-12; 19. Jude, verse 9; 20. Revelation 19 (verses 1,3,4, and 6). □

**Order Bound Volumes of**

**THE SWORD AND STAFF in Spanish:  
LA ESPADA Y EL CAYADO**

- 1995-1996 volumen encuadernado de "La Espada y El Cayado" (en español); □ 1997-1998; □ 1999-2000; □ 2001-2002; □ 2003-2004

THE LAST TWO YEARS OF THE SWORD  
AND STAFF NOW READY IN  
BOOK FORM! (2009-2010)—  
Order Today!



No charge. Just send a small contribution to help with the mailing expense.

The pages of this book are profusely filled with good Scriptural material drawn from the Bible, as its teachings are expounded. Here you will find a good source of spiritual material that will encourage and inspire. Here you have a handy study and reference source in more of a permanent form. Indexed. Great to make it part of your personal or church library. If you have the other bound volumes of years before, you will want to add this one to your set while we have a good supply of them available.—Editor

Get Them While You Can...

ONE MORE ADDED TO BOUND VOLUMES  
THAT ARE AVAILABLE—Order Now!

BOUND VOLUMES are available going back through 1993, eighteen years in all (including the new one above). Now would be a good time to get them with the new one (while we have a supply). There is no charge for these bound volumes, as such. All that we ask is that a small contribution be made to help with the expense of mailing. We are no commercial endeavor. Our primary concern is getting out the truth of God's Word (and keeping our bills paid as we do this). These are back issues of The Sword and Staff that have been put together in book form with an index. Herein you will find good solid Bible material that is timeless and timely; a source of inspiration, studies, sermons; and a great source for church bulletins. Many new subscribers take advantage of getting these back volumes to catch up with reading they had missed theretofore. Detailed information about ordering is seen elsewhere on this page, as well as other printed materials that are available. Let us hear from you.—Editor

(CLIP and MAIL or WRITE)

Gentlemen:

Enclosed find my contribution. Please put me on the mailing list of The Sword and Staff. ☐ New ☐ Renew

Name: .....

Address (with zip): .....

(Check for bound volumes of The Sword and Staff)

- ☐ 1993-1994 bound volume of The Sword and Staff
- ☐ 1995-1996 bound volume of The Sword and Staff
- ☐ 1997-1998 bound volume of The Sword and Staff
- ☐ 1999-2000 bound volume of The Sword and Staff
- ☐ 2001-2002 bound volume of The Sword and Staff
- ☐ 2003-2004 bound volume of The Sword and Staff
- ☐ 2005-2006 bound volume of The Sword and Staff
- ☐ 2007-2008 bound volume of The Sword and Staff
- ☐ 2009-2010 bound volume of The Sword and Staff
- ☐ Poems of The Soul and Proverbs—J.E. Gibbons

Church in Mount Airy  
c/o The SWORD and STAFF  
Post Office Box 147  
Mt. Airy, NC 27030 USA  
Telephone: (336) 789-1044

Non-Profit Organ.  
U.S. POSTAGE  
PAID  
Sugar Creek, OH 44681  
Permit No. 44

To Addressee or Current Resident



Check to Order Booklets, Tracts, Etc.

Title	Number Wanted
➔ Our Great and Glorious God	
➔ "What Must I Do To Be Saved?"	
➔ Baptism for the Remission of Sins	
➔ Objections to the Necessity of Baptism Answered	
➔ EXCUSES ANSWERED	
➔ The Moving Impetus of Faith & Grounds of Our Assurance	
➔ After Baptism, What?	
➔ "Advice I Would Give a New Christian"	
➔ What Is the Meaning of the Expression to "Call Upon the Name of the Lord"?	
➔ What is the Meaning of John 4:24?	
➔ "The More Excellent Way"	
➔ The Subject of the Holy Spirit Made Simple, A Study	
➔ "Be Filled With the Spirit"	
➔ YOU, Your Insecurities and GOD	
➔ "Meditations on the 23rd Psalm"	
➔ The Model Prayer Examined and Expounded	
➔ The Meaning of Suffering in the Life of a Christian	
➔ "Why Do Bad Things Happen to Good People?"	
➔ Problems in Distinguishing the Spiritual in Reference to the Kingdom	
➔ "Strange Doctrine"	
➔ "Random Thoughts and Suggestions on LOVE and MARRIAGE"	
➔ Rock-n-Roll Revisited	
➔ Is It Wrong for a Christian to Use Tobacco?	
➔ Every Sunday?	
➔ "Easter" Every Sunday	
➔ Christianity Without Denominations	
➔ THE CHURCH AND DENOMINATIONALISM	
➔ What Do We Mean by "Undenominational" New Testament Christianity?	
➔ Principles Governing the Public Assembly of the Church	
➔ "HIS CHURCH IS MARCHING ON" (song with glue on back to place in back of hymn books)	

☐ NOBODY LEFT BEHIND: INSIGHT INTO "END-TIME" PROPHECIES by David Vaughn Elliott.—\$15.00