

The Sword AND Staff

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

A Prayer Prayed by the Early Church

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23 And [Peter and John] being let go, they went to their own company, and reported all that the chief priests and elders had said unto them.

24 And when they heard that, they lifted up their voice to God with one accord, and said, *Lord, thou art God, which hast made heaven, and earth, and the sea, and all that in them is:*

25 *Who by the mouth of thy servant David hast said, Why did the heathen rage, and the people imagine vain things?*

26 *The kings of the earth stood up, and the rulers were gathered together against the Lord, and against his Christ.*

27 *For of a truth against thy holy child [servant] Jesus, whom thou hast anointed, both Herod, and Pontius Pilate, with the Gentiles, and the people of Israel, were gathered together,*

28 *For to do whatsoever thy hand and thy counsel determined before to be done.*

29 *And now, Lord, behold their threatenings: and grant unto thy servants, that with all boldness they may speak thy word,*

30 *By stretching forth thine hand to heal; and that signs and wonders may be done by the name of thy holy child [servant] Jesus.*

31 And when they had prayed, the place was shaken where they were assembled together; and they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and they spake the word of God with boldness.

32 And the multitude of them that believed were of one heart and of one soul: neither said any of them that ought of the things which he possessed was his own; but they had all things common.

33 And with great power gave the apostles witness of the resurrection of the Lord Jesus: and great grace was upon them all.—*Acts 4:23-33, KJV*



THE CHURCH was born in a prayer meeting, has had its being, and thrived in an atmosphere of prayer. In the upper room, leading up to Pentecost, the apostles continued “in prayer and supplication, with the women, and Mary the mother of Jesus, and with his brethren” (Acts 1:13,

14). Those baptized on the day of Pentecost “continued stedfastly in the apostles’ doctrine and fellowship and in breaking of bread, and in prayers” (Acts 2:42). “Peter and John went up together into the temple at the *hour of prayer*” (Acts 3:1). Now in the 4th chapter of Acts, having been arrested and threatened by the same high court that condemned Jesus to death, they return unto “their own” and immediately engage God in prayer (as we read in the Scripture printed at the beginning of this article). The mention of prayer is found throughout the book of Acts. In his epistles, Paul admonished, “Pray without ceasing” (1 Thessalonians 5:17; Romans 12:12; Colossians 4:2).

In view of all of this, it would be well for us to take a good look at this prayer prayed by the early church. There are good lessons to learn here. They were confronting hostility and intolerance from the Jewish authorities that would go from threatening to beatings; then from beatings to martyrdom. What they should do next, and how, was approached with prayer. It has been said that until a Christian has prayed, the most important thing that a Christian can do is to pray. In their prayer we can see their concept of God and what they were really praying about. From their example we can better direct our prayers to God.

Those Who Prayed

After being threatened, having been released by the Jewish authorities, Peter and John return to “their own company.” No doubt this refers to the other apostles, with possibly others in attendance. They report their experience with the high court of the Jews and their being commanded not to preach or teach anymore in the name of Jesus. When they heard this, all with “one accord” went to God in prayer. We are reminded of the upper room gathering before Pentecost (Acts 1:13, 14).

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—THANK YOU—

Proverbially ***SPEAKING...***

LIGHT dispels darkness.

We reap what we sow (Galatians 6:7), but in greater proportions.

Short cut methods usually get short cut results.

Sometimes when we can't see a matter clearly, we need to step back so that we can see the big picture.

When all is said and done, there is usually more said than done.

We may not be what we think we are, but we are what we think (Proverbs 4:23; 23:7).

In a real sense, if we fear God, we have nothing else to fear.

In helping others, you will find that you are the one who is helped the most.

It is best to not talk unless you have something to say.

The abundant life (John 10:10) is experienced by abounding in the work of the Lord. (1 Corinthians 15:58).

Common sense doesn't seem to be all that common.

The spiritual is not advanced by appealing to the flesh. □

EDITORIAL COMMENTS



PUTTING THE KINGDOM OF GOD FIRST AND CHURCH ATTENDANCE

WE WISH to consider the following two Scriptural statements in conjunction with one another. The Lord Jesus Christ declared in the Sermon on the Mount, "But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you" (Matthew 6:33). The writer of the book of Hebrews admonished, "Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is; but exhorting one another: and so much the more, as ye see the day approaching" (Hebrews 10:25).

The word "church" means assembly, and the church is the kingdom of God. Therefore, a Christian's faithfulness in church attendance is a good indicator as to whether he or she is really seeking first the kingdom of God. One's priorities and values are made evident here. If Christ is first in our lives, we will meet on the first day of every week to remember the Lord's death in the Lord's Supper (Luke 22:19,20; Acts 20:7). If we are indeed disciples of Christ, disciples meaning learners, we will meet with other disciples (learners) of Christ to learn all that we can about Christ and his teachings (about God's Word, the Bible). Remember Acts 2:42. Recall that "the disciples [learners] were called Christians first in Antioch" (Acts 11:26) in connection with being assembled for that very purpose, learning. We are not to forsake the assembly. It is the church of Christ. To forsake the assembly is to forsake Christ. And if we find ourselves in a situation locally where there is no faithful New Testament church, we therewith are that church and should begin assembling as such.

Let us further scrutinize ourselves in reference to the assembly and its teaching program (and it indeed should involve real teaching, and not just some little "devotionals" and meaningless sweet nothings). Recognition of God and religion has been pushed out of our public schools by the secular humanists. Consequently, young people, as they study and prepare themselves for life day after day, get the impression that God and religion are unimportant and have nothing to do with life. It is sad to say, but many professing Christians subconsciously have absorbed this godless (and ungodly) way of thinking. They would not think of their children being absent from public school, nor tolerate it, but when it comes to Bible study at church, any truancy is allowable (whether it be staying home to study for public school, sports, scouts, going to the beach, or whatever comes up). Studying the Bible and Christianity are irrelevant to real life

(that is what they in essence are saying, in spite of what the Lord said in Matthew 6:33). God is not first, if at all, in their lives. At other times visitors may come. The assembly is missed. Who comes first? The assembly is missed again (especially on Sunday evenings and the midweek). “Members” are seen absorbed in their watching of television or have gone to “take in” some worldly entertainment (or to be with their worldly friends). What has taken first place in their lives? In those “perilous times” of the last days that the apostle Paul said were coming, he states that people would be “lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God” (2 Timothy 3:1,4). And he is talking about religious people, too, for he said that they would be “having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof” (3:5).

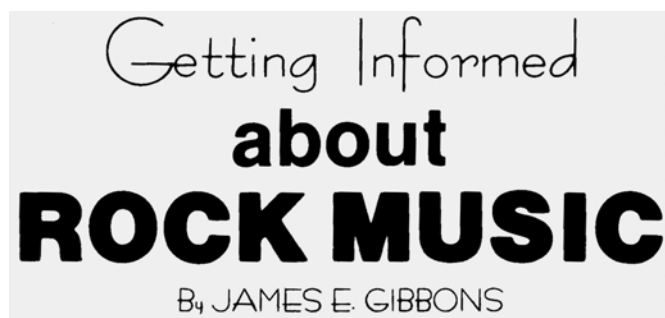
We could go on with this little dissertation and even enlarge upon our thoughts derived from Matthew 6:33 and Hebrews 10:25. But church attendance is only the edge of the iceberg. Faithfulness in this respect would lead us to believe that a person is likewise conscientiously trying to be faithful in other areas of his life. Absence in church attendance indicates there are problems in a person’s life greater than missing church. Considering everything, is God really first in our lives? □

EDITORIAL

Byways

ROCK ‘N’ ROLL REVISITED

(This article appeared in *THE SWORD AND STAFF* back in the mid 1980’s, but we believe it is still relevant today.)



MOST OLDER adults know little about rock ‘n’ roll music except that it is loud and unpleasant to their ears. To them the volume of the instruments is so loud and intense that the lyrics cannot be understood. It is dismissed as undesirable nonsense without even trying to consider the message of the music.

But is this just so much innocent noise listened to by so many young people?

I had always thought rock music was not exactly right, had discouraged young people from listening to it, but had not really looked into the matter with depth. So, when I read a book recently, *Why Knock Rock*, I was provoked to do what they said.

They suggested that parents “get smart.” If you don’t know what you are talking about, young people will call your bluff. Check out the record department of the local variety store, then a rock record shop. You will be shocked (as a Christian) at what you see. Looking at the album covers will make you feel as if you are flipping through the pages of *Playboy* magazine. You will see sex, violence, drugs, hedonism, along with Satanism, being peddled. Drug paraphernalia (at the rock record shops) may be for sale along with the records.

Obtain and browse through magazines that give the latest on rock music and rock groups; magazines that are prepared for, aimed at and read by young people. Such magazines are *Rolling Stone*, *Hit Parader*, *Circus*, *Musician*, and *Creem*. Here you will see what is going on with the rock groups and be able to read the lyrics of songs you could not understand.

I did this, and I became educated really fast! You get it straight from the “horse’s mouth” here. No second hand “stuff.” I was very uncomfortable with a lot of the “gutter” talk about sex by the rock stars, but I was determined to become informed.

There were two words which kept surfacing in these magazines in talking about the rock ‘n’ roll world. They were *hedonistic* and *androgynous*.

“Hedonistic”

In the November, 1984, issue of *Hit Parader* (page 12), a mother wrote this publication: “I’m getting sick and tired of reading about the lewd and lascivious lifestyles that every heavy metal performer seems to lead. I’m the mother of a 14-year old son, and I’m thinking about preventing him from reading about rock and roll until he learns that not every rock star is only concerned with drugs, alcohol and premarital sex. Would you please write something that would explain this to my son?” The straight-forward answer to the letter (by the magazine) is very revealing: “Unfortunately, rock and roll is perhaps the most hedonistic of all entertainment forms. Bands like Motely Crue, Quiet Riot and Van Halen truly do lead lives that would make Julius Caesar green with envy. Thankfully, from what I’ve been able to observe, the use of illegal drugs among rock performers has dropped

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sharply in recent years—but their love for booze and sex remains as strong as ever.”

In case “hedonistic” is not one of your words, it comes from a Greek word that means pleasure. It is used in English to describe a lifestyle; the self-indulgent pursuit of pleasure, any kind, as a way of life. It is fleshly and animalistic and has no hang-ups in reference to morals. Anything goes. If it brings sensual gratification, do it.

Unrestrained illicit sex, liquor and drugs are marks of the trade in the rock world. Gene Simmons of KISS is quoted in *Entertainment Week* (*Winston-Salem Journal*, January 5, 1985) as saying, “Rock ‘n’ roll is all about promiscuity, you know.” He continues, “Rock ‘n’ roll literally means sex. The term comes from a Leadbelly song saying, ‘let me rock you all night long.’ He wasn’t talking about reading Nietzsche to her.”

Nikki Sixx of Motley Crue in the October 31, 1984, issue of *Circus* (page 66) ties in their hedonistic lifestyle with their success, “The kids who come to see us want to identify with that. They see us living a reality that’s just fantasy for them.” Then Dee Snider of Twisted Sisters says his music is like psychotherapy. Appealing to rebellious youth, he said, “If you can’t afford to go to a doctor to find out why you’re _____ up, then listen to metal. Dance around and you wanna go home and kill your parents!” (page 111 of same issue of *Circus*).

“Androgynous”

Also in the November, 1984, issue of *Hit Parade* magazine (page 29) upcoming rock groups are singled out for consideration. One group is said already to be “an international press favorite due to their hard rock sound and androgynous image,” and they were expected to make a go of it. The word “androgynous” keeps reoccurring as the common denominator of successful rock groups, and is considered as one of the necessary ingredients to bring this about. What does it mean?

Actually it is weird! The term “androgynous” is a compound word formed from two Greek words, *andros* plus *guné*. The meaning of *andros* is man, and *guné* means woman. So, the word “androgynous” means male and female in one person. Hermaphrodite would describe it, or the practice of functioning either heterosexually or homosexually (being bisexual).

This explains a lot of things. It explains the image the rock groups are trying to project, as well as

many times living it out in their lives. Look at the very appearance of the rock singers. In one sense they look crudely masculine, but at the same time they may have long effeminate hair, be wearing makeup, ear rings, and other jewelry commonly associated with women. Some of their clothing would be more appropriate on the opposite sex (if appropriate is the word we should use).

The names they choose by which to identify their groups projects the androgynous image. What about the AC/DC group? This is said to mean either heterosexual or homosexual (bisexual). There is a group called the “Iron Maiden” (and it is composed of men). Another one is called “Twisted Sisters” (men!). This is seen in the KISS group, Alice Cooper and Boy George.

Even if they don’t pick such names, they try to project a mystic to keep you guessing about their sexual identity. Such an aura surrounds Michael Jackson. The Prince in his “Purple Rain” says, “I’m not a woman, I’m not a man, I am something that you’ve never had...” (*Entertainment Week*, *Winston-Salem Journal*, November 3, 1984).

Recently as I was leafing through a magazine while waiting in a doctor’s office, I saw this write-up about this rock group. It had a picture of them in concert. When they came out to perform, two of the macho-looking guys passionately kiss one another in the mouth. In another magazine, two fellows are seen pawing one another.

It is not a lovely picture, is it? In fact, it is sick. And to think that somewhere along the way music has done a flip-flop. When a lot of us were younger, pop music referred to the easy listening kind. Not any longer. Now pop means rock. It is the music commonly listened to by the younger generation, and is it any wonder that there are so many mixed up people today? Looking to these rock stars, and identifying with them (even with their androgynous image), it is no wonder that so many are confused about their personal, sexual identity.

I am convinced that the field of rock ‘n’ roll music has largely become the devil’s playground. Diabolical influences seem to be behind these performers as they preach their hedonistic philosophies of life to our young people as entertainment. Rock music broke down the middle class’ abhorrence to drugs, which theretofore had been kept in the ghettos of the larger cities. So much of the music is anti-Christian, anti-marriage, and anti-family. One recent song asked, “WHAT’S LOVE GOT TO DO WITH IT?” Neither do we need any more Pink Floyds with their nihilistic fatalism.

The book that I mentioned earlier in this article gives four questions to ask about rock music (or any other kind of music) in determining whether it is right or wrong.

1. What are the lyrics saying?
2. What kind of lifestyles have the musicians chosen?
3. What do the graphics on the album covers indicate?
4. What are the goals of the songs and the performers?

YOUNG PERSON, OLDER PERSON, think on these things. (End of reprint article)

The Story Continued Many Years Later

That is the end of the article this writer put together back in the 80's, but it is not the end of the story. The story goes on. We can't help but think of the words attributed to men of wisdom from ancient times until now. It is said that Plato said, "Watch music. It's a very important art form. Rulers should be careful about what songs are allowed to be sung." To Plato, music was "the movement of sound to reach the soul for the education of its virtue" (Plato's *Republic*). Andrew Fletcher, a Scottish politician of years leading up to more recent history, is said to have asserted, "I knew a very wise man that believed that if a man were permitted to make all the ballads, he need not care who should make the laws of a nation." Thus, he was supposed to have said, "I don't care who writes a country's laws; I just want to know who writes a country's songs."

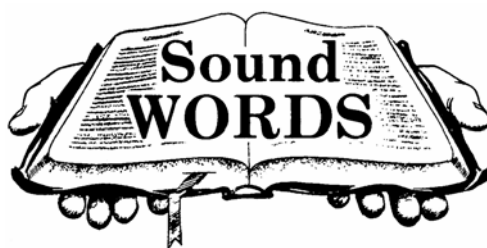
With these words in mind, consider rock 'n' roll "music." It is our firm conviction that our society is experiencing fall-out from a whole generation that has been "brought up" on this kind of "music."

Times were more modest and restrained when rock 'n' roll was first introduced into our society. Therefore years ago when the "godfather" of rock music, Elvis Presley, first appeared on the Ed Sullivan variety show, they seemed to not know what to do with him. The television cameras would not show the lower part of his body as it "gyrated" indecently with his music. This was tame as to what would follow later in the name of this kind of "music." In fact, go back and review the first section of this column as to the meaning of the expression, "rock 'n' roll" (the reprint article). The expression has reference to the sex act itself, as the DJ's dubbed this music.

Then as rock 'n' roll gained momentum and massively impacted our society, *Columbia Encyclopedia* says, "All aspects of the music—its heavy

beat, loudness, self-absorbed lyrics, and raving delivery—indicated a teenage defiance of adult values and authority." Rebellion, the hedonistic and the sex element always seemed to be there. Reread the first part of this article that we have reprinted. Besides the unsavory element of promiscuous sex, generally speaking, the androgynous image projected by the rock performers always hits us in the face. There was a crude and eerie mystic about them that left one questioning. What about these fellows? Are they male or female? They appeared crudely masculine, but at the same time, with their long hair and makeup, feminine. Who would have ever thought that their mixed-up and dual sexual identity would spill over into a whole society of human beings? It is our conviction that their music, their songs, their mixed-up sexual identity (and behavior) overwhelmingly impacted a whole generation of young and formative lives. Remember our quotation from Plato and the other one, "I don't care who writes a country's laws; I just want to know who writes a country's songs." People are so mixed up today, that some would even try to impose same-sex marriage on us. (And politicians could care less, except to get votes). We point our finger at rock 'n' roll music as a strong and contributing factor to the mixed-up modern world in which we find ourselves living today. This is our indictment. □

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



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

HAVING reference to Christianity, the apostle Paul stated, "Which things also we speak, not in the words which man's wisdom teacheth, but which the Holy Ghost [Spirit] teacheth..." (1 Corinthians 2:13). Christianity is not geared to the high sounding and artificial language of philosophy, or even theology, but simply to the simplicity and purity of the Scriptures. When we talk about Bible things, and Bible doctrines, we should use the terminology of the inspired Word of God. And didn't Jesus say, "For out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh" (Matthew 12:34)? Anyway

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that you look at it, words are indicative of our hearts. If our hearts are right, our words will be right. Our commitment to the teachings of the Scriptures likewise will be reflected in our use of the language of the Scriptures. We call Bible things by Bible names (and use Bible terms in a Scriptural way).

***Ekklesia*, “Church”**

Ekklesia, represented in our language by the word “church,” is the primary term that God has chosen to designate His New Testament people. ***Ekklesia*** is a compounded word, ***ek*** (out) + ***kaleo*** (to call), meaning assembly. It is found over 100 times in the New Testament Scriptures, one time referring to the children of Israel in the Old Testament (Acts 7:38) and three times to a non-Christian public assembly (Acts 19:32,39,41 = here translated “assembly,” KJV). All other references, beginning with Christ’s declaration in Matthew 16:18, have reference to Christian believers. The apostle Paul starts many of his letters, addressing a church. In the book of Revelation we read of the seven churches in Asia. It never refers to a building, but to a people. Scripturally speaking, it is never appropriate to call the building a church. And as it refers to a people, it is used in three different ways in the New Testament, (1) the church universally in the world (Matthew 16:18; Colossians 1:18), (2) the church in one given city or locality (1 Corinthians 1:2; 1 Thessalonians 1:1), and (3) the church in an assembled sense (1 Corinthians 14:34; Colossians 4:16). Although other figures are used collectively referring to Christians, such as kingdom and body of Christ, church is the most common and standardized way of talking about New Testament believers (especially after the church came into being).

Therefore, let us “nail down” some conclusions in this consideration.

(1) It is highly inappropriate to call the building, or meeting place, a church. Scripturally speaking, only the people of God are a church. Christ did not purchase a building with his own blood (Acts 20:28).

(2) In the New Testament, “church” is not used to designate one denominational body as distinguished from another denominational body. Christ said, “I will build ***my*** church” (singular). Paul said there is “one body” (one church) (Ephesians 4:4). Division and doctrinal error are not of God (1 Co-

rinthians 3:4; Romans 16:17,18; 2 John, verse 9). Religiously to use the term in such a manner is to besmirch its original significance.

(3) It is strange that some religious bodies meeting in assembly do not even call themselves a church anymore. Some designate themselves as “Ministries” and other novel expressions. What are they trying to say, anyway? Christ said, “I will build my church.” Ministry is what the church should be doing, not what the church is. Did Christ “purchase” ministries with his own blood? □



A Prayer Prayed by the Early Church (Continued from Page 1)

Prayers are most effective when there is “one accord” among those involved in prayer. Paul wrote to Timothy, “I will therefore that men pray everywhere, lifting up holy hands, without wrath and doubting [disputing]” (1 Timothy 2:8). Peter admonished that husband and wife dwell together harmoniously “that your prayers be not hindered” (1 Peter 3:7). Then, the Lord Jesus, coming at this from much the same angle, said, “Again I say unto you, That if two of you shall agree on earth as touching anything that they shall ask, it shall be done for them of my Father which is in heaven” (Matthew 18:19).

And this is how they prayed in this prayer that was prayed by the early church. Their agreement was such that it was like they had “lifted up their voice to God with one accord” (Acts 4:24). And their prayer was heard and answered.

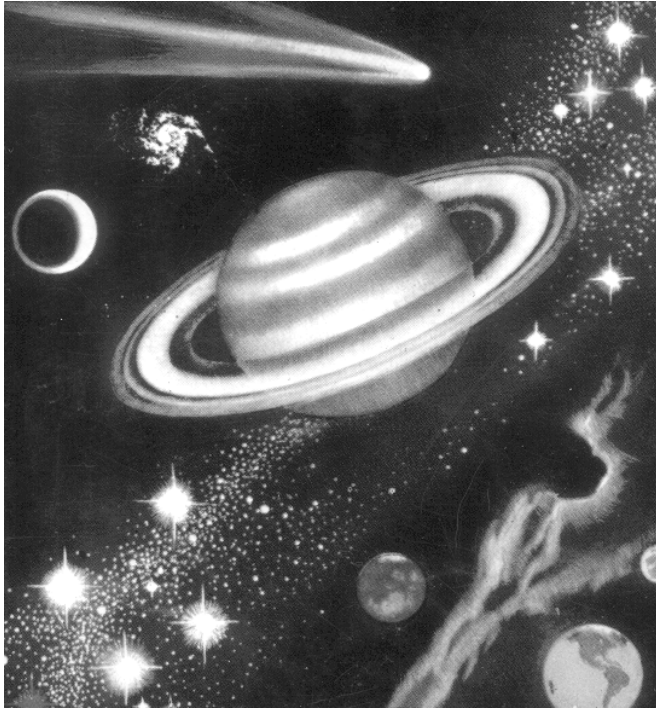
Their Concept of God

Next, let us notice how they addressed God in their prayer. This will tell us much about their concept of the Being to whom they are praying. Their concept of God reflects what they actually believed about God and, consequently, the inherent potential and possibility of Him answering their prayer. A limited concept of God would put limits on what they would expect from God.

Two great truths stand out in their concept of God. God is almighty. God is omniscient.

They ***first*** address God in their prayer, by saying, “Lord, thou art God, which hast made heaven, and earth, and the sea, and all that in them is...” The word translated “Lord” is not the one most commonly used in the language of the New Testament, but is ***despota***, found only four times in the entire New Testament referring to Deity. It means one who is absolute, sovereign. It has come over into English in the word “despot,” and, as such, it

has acquired a negative connotation. But, as used in the New Testament in connection with God, it simply refers to an almighty, absolute and sovereign Being. He is the mighty Creator who made the heavens and the earth, having brought everything into being, as acknowledged here. He made it all and is over all. He is the almighty Elohim.



The **second** great truth that impacts us as we examine their prayer is that God is omniscient; He is all-knowing. What had happened in reference to Christ was no accident. It was all according to the Divine plan and foreknowledge of the One who in one panoramic glance from eternity could see the end from the beginning. Yes, when the rulers set themselves against the LORD and his Anointed, it was accordingly, as they prayed, “For to do whatsoever thy hand and thy counsel determined before to be done.” It was of this Christ, as Peter later would pen in his first epistle, “Who verily was foreordained before the foundation of the world, but was manifest in these last times for you” (1 Peter 1:20).

A consideration of God’s omniscience is mind-boggling and it simply overwhelms us. We believe that He knows everything that is, everything that was, everything that will be, and that He even knows what might have been. He knows who the saved would be from eternity. Jesus said that even “the very hairs of your head are all numbered” (Matthew 10:30). Interestingly, the Lord also said, “Woe unto thee, Chorazin!... Bethsaida!... Capernaum... for if the mighty works, which have been

done in thee, had been done in Sodom, it would have remained until this day” (Matthew 11:20-24). Yes, God even knows what might have been.

So, to approach the (1) Almighty God of eternity, (2) who has total knowledge of anything and everything, is to be assured that our petitions will be heard, and if they are in accordance with His will, there is no reason that they cannot and will not be answered. God unquestionably has the power and knowledge about our situation to bring it about. That was the basis on which the early church prayed in Acts chapter 4.

That for Which They Prayed

Most of their prayer now having been prayed in magnifying the greatness of God, and the basis upon which they are assured to have their prayer answered, they now get around to the asking part of their petition. “And now, Lord, behold their threatenings: and grant unto thy servants, that with all boldness they may speak thy word, by stretching forth thine hand to heal; and that signs and wonders may be done by the name of thy holy child [servant] Jesus.” The report of Peter and John accented what they were up against. While with them, Jesus had attempted to get them ready for what was ahead. He told them, “And when they bring you unto the synagogues, and unto magistrates, and powers, take ye no thought how or what thing ye shall answer, or what ye shall say: For the Holy Ghost [Spirit] shall teach you in the same hour what ye ought to say” (Luke 12:11,12). Also, the apostles had already been endowed with power to do miraculous things. In spite of all this, they still felt it necessary to go to God in prayer. In a sense, they pray about that which is already theirs. However, realizing potential human weakness, an extra element enters into this prayer for the apostles, “that with all boldness they may speak thy word.” Years later, the apostle Paul in prison at Rome makes the same prayer request involving boldness (Ephesians 6:19,20; Colossians 4:3,4).

And another interesting episode takes place later in the 12th chapter of Acts having to do with the apostle Peter. Herod had the apostle James put to death, and seeing it pleased the Jews, he had Peter apprehended with the intention of him meeting the same fate after the Passover. We read, “Peter therefore was kept in prison: but prayer was made without ceasing of the church unto God for him” (Acts 12:5). Although chained between soldiers in maximum security, the angel of the

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Lord with little disruption intervenes in the darkness of the night. Peter is set free, and makes his way to the house of Mary, the mother of John Mark, “where many were gathered together praying” (12:12). He knocks on the door, and the young girl who went to the door leaves Peter standing on the outside as she runs to tell everyone. Their decided response to what she said was, “Thou art mad” (12:15). This has always been a puzzle to this writer. For what were they praying? Evidently, the prayer was not for Peter’s safety, or release. Otherwise they would not have reacted this way. Perhaps we are safe in saying they were praying that Peter would be bold; that he would not deny the Lord; that he would be “faithful unto death” (Revelation 2:10), if he must die.

In all of these cases, and in the prayer before us in Acts 4, obviously selfish concerns about personal suffering had not entered the picture. Their overriding concern is getting the message of Christ across, and getting it across with boldness. That for which they prayed takes place. Their prayer is resoundingly answered. We read, “And when they had prayed, the place was shaken where they were assembled together; and they were all filled with the Holy Ghost [Spirit], and they spake the word of God with boldness...And with great power gave the apostles witness of the resurrection of the Lord Jesus: and great grace was upon them all” (Acts 4:31,33). Later, when beaten by the Jewish authorities and released, their utter lack of regard for self stands out. It’s Christ that counts. We read, “And they departed from the presence of the council, rejoicing that they were counted worthy to suffer shame for his name” (Acts 5:41).

Closing Comments

In closing, ponder this prayer again. There is much for us to learn here. Our prayers need to be with one accord. We need to really believe that God is Almighty and all-knowing, which has everything to do with our prayers being answered. Our prayers need to be unselfish as we seek the things of God first, even overriding concerns about personal well-being. Let us be bold, and unashamed, in our stand for truth and righteousness. □

The Cross Back Then

THE CROSS today has become a piece of jewelry, a beautiful decoration in a church, a symbol of faith. It is difficult for us to pass back through the centuries of tradition to see crucifix-

ion as a form of capital punishment so horrible that polite people would not so much as mention it. If the idea of crucifixion was abhorrent to decent people in the ancient world, imagine the difficulty of trying to convince them that a god—indeed, THE God—had willingly endured such a punishment.—*Thomas Schmidt* □

BIBLE QUESTIONS

(Random Questions Over the Bible)

1. On what day were Jewish baby boys circumcised after their birth?
2. How many sons did Ishmael, the son of Abraham by Hagar, have?
3. When the male Israelite babies were being killed by Pharaoh, how long was baby Moses hid before he was placed in the ark and the Nile River?
4. What picturesque language is used in the song of Moses to describe the parting of the Red Sea?
5. What book in the Bible refers to God as “Almighty” more than any other book in the Bible?
6. What seven things are grouped together in the book of Proverbs and are distinguished as being hated by God (and being an abomination to Him)?
7. In Bible times, what was a primary use of horses?
8. Who in the Bible was called a “backsliding heifer”?
9. What O.T. prophet said, “Although the fig tree shall not blossom, neither shall fruit be in the vines; [though] the labour of the olive shall fail, and the fields shall yield no meat [harvest]; [though] the flocks shall be cut off from the fold, and there shall be no herd in the stalls: yet I will rejoice in the LORD, I will joy in the God of my salvation”?
10. What two O.T. prophets lived in Babylon and prophesied during the Babylonian Captivity?
11. What are some occasions in the Bible when people were prompted and inspired to send gifts to others?
12. Where did Jesus go to live in the beginning of his ministry after leaving Nazareth?
13. To whom did Jesus say, “Follow me, and I will make you fishers of men”?
14. What was an unusual “pulpit” used by Jesus while presenting his teachings on the kingdom in a whole series of parables?
15. Whom did Jesus call a fox?
16. In what chapter of the Bible do we find the word “hypocrite(s)” more than in any other chapter of the Bible?
17. What are five cases of suicide mentioned in the Bible wherein people killed themselves?
18. Who is the first person after the apostles to have performed miracles in the early church?
19. Is there any Scriptural evidence that any of the Herod family (or associates) were ever attached to or embraced Christianity?
20. Where is the last time the word “disciple” is found in the New Testament?

(NOTICE: Answers to questions 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 the magazine *THE SWORD AND STAFF*. I enjoy it so much!

"My husband became a 'Christian only'...He is very devoted to God's Word and ways. Our life together is so much better now. We are truly 'one.'

"You are in our prayers. Please keep us in yours. Keep up the good work you are doing—faithful to death and to God be the glory."

■ "I would like to thank you for the back issues of *THE SWORD AND STAFF* that you sent. They have been a real blessing since the day I received them. Not only in my spiritual life, but I've been able to share them with others. They serve as a great witnessing tool; the truth is hard to refute.

"I have just received the vol. 44, #1 issue with the cover article 'What Must I Do to Be Saved?' Great, great, great!!! I'm excited to share and discuss this issue—please understand the gospel is not being preached within most correctional institutions in the state of Florida. Most times I feel as if I'm the only one driving with the arrow on a one way street.

"Once again, thank you so much for adding my name to your mailing list and for the proclamation of the truth."

NORTH CAROLINA:

■ "Please remove me from the mailing list of *THE SWORD AND STAFF*."

■ "Please send me your book, *NOBODY LEFT BEHIND*...This book was highly recommended to me."

■ "Thanks so much for the good work you're doing. We appreciate *THE SWORD AND STAFF* and your straightforward articles and answers..."

■ "We were handed this volume [a copy] of *THE SWORD AND STAFF* (Volume 44) by a friend and would like to be on your mailing list. The words and thoughts should be in the hands of every person, and we will endeavor to let as many people as we can know about your publication...Enclosed please find a contribution to help with expenses..."

■ "This note is long overdue...We want to express our thanks for your 'labor of love' through the years for printing a wonderful paper and *TRUE TO GOD'S WORD*. We are thinking that the company in Ohio was a blessing from our Lord also. So thankful that Christians have responded with donations and the support you needed at this time..."

"We believe you are a sincere servant of God, and we value your remarks. May God continue to bless you and yours."

KENTUCKY:

■ "*THE SWORD AND STAFF* is very helpful in my search for the true meaning of God's Word. May God bless you all for your effort..."

■ "Thank you for your faithful work and tremendous paper/magazine, *THE SWORD AND STAFF*! You do an outstanding job and have for many years.

"I would like to order 50 copies of your new tract 'What Must I Do to Be Saved?'..."

"Thank you so much and keep up the great work!"

WEST VIRGINIA:

■ "It's taken me a long time to get around to mailing this. My husband and I enjoy receiving a publication that we can be sure is printing God's truth.

"Please send us 1 copy of *NOBODY LEFT BEHIND* and 2 copies of *POEMS OF THE SOUL AND PROVERBS*. I've included a little extra which should cover the shipping, at least..."

PENNSYLVANIA:

■ "I greatly appreciate how quickly we received the tracts we requested. I especially appreciate the samples of booklets and tracts which you sent with them. You will be receiving another order in the near future. Enclosed please find a gift from our congregation for the tracts which we have already received.

"The fact that you mailed out the tracts based on a phone request speaks highly of the bond that exists 'in Christ.' Sharing in 'one Lord, one faith, one baptism' places us in a realm that the world doesn't understand. Through Your ministry I am certain many will come to an understanding of 'the faith' and become a part of it.

"I have enjoyed reading *THE SWORD AND STAFF* for many years."

NEW YORK:

■ "I was recently given a copy of your publication and I enjoyed it greatly. I am writing to ask if you could please add me to your mailing list so I may receive future issues..."

(Continued on Next Page)

READERS'...Response

(Continued from Previous Page)

MASSACHUSETTS:

■ "Your article [about the kingdom being spiritual] is loaded with good thoughts. I especially like your double approach. The religious world fails to see the church as the kingdom, so of course you dealt with that. On the other hand many of our brethren have been taught so much that the church is the kingdom that they have failed to see that Scripture does teach about the kingdom as something future, as well as present—of course heavenly, not earthly, as you well point out. I have even had the experience of teaching what Scripture clearly says about the kingdom in the heavenly phase and seen brethren become unsettled because they had it so ingrained that the church is the kingdom, period. And so, your full approach to the subject is good and needed by both sides..." (E-mail)

MICHIGAN:

■ "I'm so very thankful for your volumes of *THE SWORD AND STAFF*. My favorite part is the whole thing. Hopefully this check will help some. Thank you again for truth..."

OHIO:

■ "The latest *SWORD AND STAFF*'s lead article 'Problems in Distinguishing the Spiritual in Reference to the Kingdom' was excellent. Then the article on Baptism was so good in the last edition

"Thank you for your writing and teaching. Your work is so helpful to readers who want to continue to learn about the Bible's teachings..."

INDIANA:

■ "A friend of mine sent me a couple of copies of your pamphlets: 'Christianity Without Denominations' and 'Strange Doctrine' plus 'What Do We Mean by Undenominational New Testament Christianity?' I found them all to be very good.

"Please add my name to your mailing list..."

ILLINOIS:

■ "Thank you so much for offering these tracts..."

■ "Enclosed please find one check for a contribution. We appreciate receiving *THE SWORD AND STAFF*. We enjoy it so much..."

■ "Greetings in Jesus' name! I want to let you know how much we appreciate the Biblical teachings found in *THE SWORD AND STAFF*. I hope and pray that the Lord will continue to bless you with good health and the means to continue the ministry.

"Enclosed please find a check to cover the cost for materials requested [order for books, booklets, tracts and leaflets]..."

"Thanks again for the excellent articles and Bible teaching found in the pages of your paper!"

MISSOURI:

■ "I thoroughly enjoy your paper—It is true to the Bible with no denominational precepts to confuse us! Really enjoyed the article, 'What Must I Do to Be Saved?' Gave mine away, so am ordering more to hand out to others. Thank you and God bless."

ARKANSAS:

■ "I love *THE SWORD AND STAFF*. You do a wonderful job."

■ "To put articles in tract form is an excellent idea! Please send me what you can to display on our tract rack..."

LOUISIANA:

■ "Please send me three more books of *POEMS OF THE SOUL AND PROVERBS*. May God continue to bless you and your good work."

■ "The last *SWORD AND STAFF* was great (Vol. 44, #1). If you have them, I would like to have two or three more copies. Also, tracts..."

TEXAS:

■ "Donation enclosed to help in the publishing of *THE SWORD AND STAFF*. I look forward to receiving it each time. May the Lord continue to bless you in your work."

■ "Please send me the following items: 2 *NOBODY LEFT BEHIND: INSIGHT INTO 'END-TIME' PROPHECIES*. Tracts and leaflets—20 of each... Thanks so much for your paper. I put Christian leaflets in envelopes when I pay bills."

OKLAHOMA:

■ "Please send the tracts indicated. Keep up the good work. God bless!!"

NEBRASKA:

■ "It is always a treat when *THE SWORD AND STAFF* comes...We are truly living in ungodly times. We let that one eyed monster [TV] bring evil into our homes, influencing our children as well as us..."

CALIFORNIA:

■ "Please remove us from your mailing list."

■ "Blessings continue to abound in our lives as we read Biblical truths from your wonderful publication. Please accept the enclosed contribution for the Bible tracts listed.

Editor's Note: Check on the back page. The marker (►) indicates new tract/booklets that we have printed. They are: (2) "Problems in Distinguishing the Spiritual in Reference to the Kingdom." and (1) "Meditations on the 23rd Psalm" You thought this material would be good for wider distribution. Here it is. Order a supply. There is no charge, but any help with the expense of printing and mailing would be much appreciated.

"We are greatly rejoicing over your wonderful article entitled 'Christianity Without Denominations.' What a breath of fresh air to read these truths you have written which are shared by many other Christians we know in North America who meet simply and only in the name of our precious and wonderful Lord and Savior Jesus Christ..."

"Our Christian love to you, and all because of Jesus Christ."

OREGON:

■ *"Please remove my name from your mailing list. I don't want to receive THE SWORD AND STAFF publication."*

UNITED STATES:

■ *"I had just read the letters you had sent to the Mormons [on your web site]... I found your letter and what had happened very interesting. I learned so much from it. I know I said this to you before, but good job, excellent! Thank you, brother! I'm a fairly new Christian...and find your material so helpful when doing Bible studies and even ones I had already done myself. Then I find an article about the same topic you had done and it brings more and more truth in the matter that I hadn't even thought to study..." (Web page response, E-mail)*

■ *"I recently read an extended article concerning the idea that punishment in hell is not everlasting, but rather after a time of punishment in hell, the body and soul are annihilated. The amount of time in punishment is based on the degree of sinfulness the person has lived outside of Christ. This leads to the idea of degrees of both rewards and punishment. I would like very much to have your thoughts on the question of whether punishment is everlasting or there comes a time when the body and soul no longer exist in hell. Thank you for your consideration of this subject." (E-mail).*

Answer:

There are many things that we do not fully understand and of which we would like to know more. We tread lightly in trying to answer your question. The apostle Peter said, in reference to matters like you brought up, the "unlearned and unstable" wrest the Scriptures to their own destruction (2 Peter 3:16). Therefore, removing the element of absolute dogma and having our words clothed in humility, here are some thoughts to consider. But we don't want to be "wiser" than what is written.

The only Scripture that I know that some might possibly think would give comfort to such a view (and views), as you mentioned above, is Luke 12:47 and 48. But it doesn't include all of the elements of the article of which you spoke (that is more like wishful thinking). Let us look into Luke 12, verses 47 and 48.

47 And that servant, which knew his lord's will, and prepared not himself, neither did according to his will, shall be beaten with many stripes.

48 But he that knew not, and did commit things worthy of stripes, shall be beaten with few stripes. For unto whomsoever much is given, of him shall be much required: and to whom men have committed much, of him they will ask the more. KJV

In our efforts to fully understand this Scripture, we need to look back and frame all of this in the full context, beginning with verse 35 and going through verse 48. Read this carefully. All of this is in the language of a parable. Also, although the principle of responsibility is universally true, the application here seems to be to servants (those who are servants of Christ, not unbelievers—verse 46). The emphasis is not on the duration of punishment, but upon the severity of judgment. Whipping or stripes are not part of the New Testament or the eternal way of looking at things, but calls to mind the carnal Old Testament system (Deuteronomy 25:2, 3; 2 Corinthians 11:24). Nor will the sword be used as in verse 46 (Luke 12:46). This was adapting the circumstances and language (parabolic) to things experienced in their "today's world." The time element is not involved as in the plain language of Matthew 25:46 where the same Greek word, *aiōnios*, is used to speak of "**everlasting** punishment" and "**life eternal**." (i.e., "And these shall go away into **everlasting** punishment: but the righteous into life **eternal**.") (Also, consider 2 Thessalonians 1:7-9 and Revelation 20:10-15 [Matthew 25:41]). The thought of severity in judgment is seen in the words, "For unto whomsoever much is given, of him shall be much required: and to whom men have committed much, of him they will ask the more" (Luke 12:48). The greater the commitment (and privileges), the greater the responsibility and accountability. We see parallel thoughts in other Scriptures. Notice. This can be seen in simply being Christians in contrast with the Law of Moses. Hebrews 2:1-3 reads, "Therefore we [Christians] ought to give the more earnest heed to the things we have heard, lest at any time we should let them slip. For if the word spoken by angels [the O.T. Law, Acts 7:53] was steadfast, and every transgression and disobedience received a just recompense of reward: How shall we escape, if we neglect so great salvation...?" Likewise, we see this principle in the words of James (James 3:1), "My brethren, be not many masters [teachers], knowing that we shall receive the greater condemnation [more severe judgment]." The emphasis in Luke 12:47 and 48 is not duration of punishment, but severity of judgment (and thus punishment). There is so much that we do not fully understand, but this seems to be the Lord's point, as we live our lives in anticipation of his second coming (and being accountable). God is perfect and righteous, and His judgment will be the same way.

(Continued on Next Page)

READERS'...Response

(Continued from Previous Page)

PHILIPPINES:

■ "I have received *THE SWORD AND STAFF*...the best paper coming to my study table for which I am grateful. May the Lord supply all your needs in printing such a paper and kindly keep sending it to us..." (E-mail)

MAURITIUS (Indian Ocean):

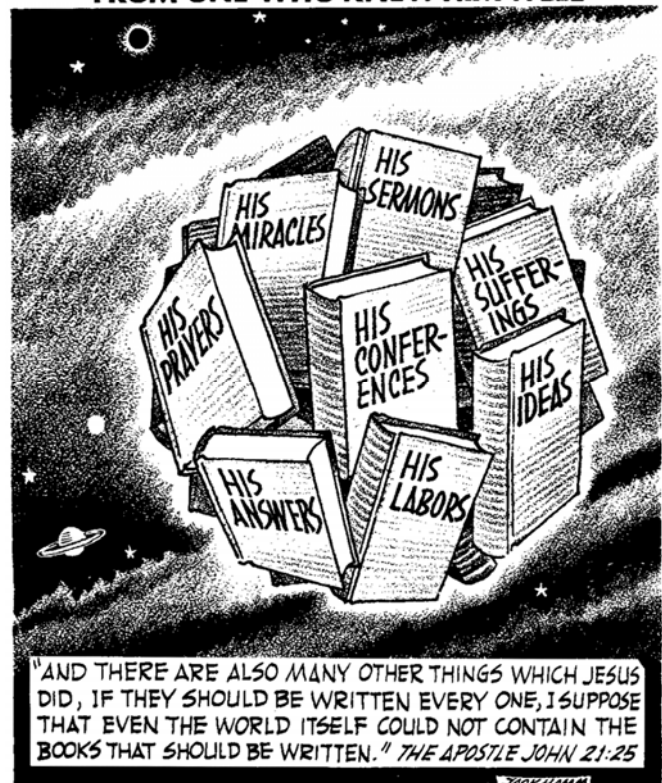
■ "I am writing to you in this present letter to thank you very much indeed for sending me regularly *THE SWORD AND STAFF* which has been a real blessing to me and helps me tremendously both in my personal Bible study and in sharing the good news to my people here in Mauritius as well..." □

BIBLE QUESTIONS

Involving Christ

1. Where in the Bible is the first promise of the coming Savior?
2. Where in the Bible is the first time we find the promise that through Abraham (his seed) all families of the earth would be blessed?
3. Where is the prophecy that vividly foretells of the suffering and crucifixion of Jesus?
4. Which is the only gospel account that goes all the way back into eternity as it begins the story of Christ?
5. Of the four, which are the only gospel accounts that tell about the birth of Christ?
6. Which three gospel accounts approach the life of Christ in much the same way and are called the synoptic gospels?
7. Where was Jesus born, where did he grow up, and where did he go to live when he began his ministry?
8. What is the only gospel account that tells of an early Judean ministry of Jesus?
9. How many times did God speak audibly from heaven in recognition of Jesus as His Son, and what were the occasions?
10. What are the only two places visited by Jesus outside of the land of Palestine proper during his lifetime on earth?
11. Where did Jesus perform his first miracle and what was it?
12. Which gospel writer tells us that there were two demoniacs living in the tombs and two blind men healed in Jericho, instead of just singling out one as in the other gospel accounts?
13. What two miracles of Jesus are the only ones that are found in all four gospel accounts?
14. Who were the three people that we have a record of Jesus raising from the dead?
15. What two miracles of Jesus were the only ones that were, in a sense, destructive in nature?
16. What law did the scribes and Pharisees repeatedly accuse Jesus of breaking?
17. Where was Jesus, and following what, when he first began to tell his disciples that he must suffer many things, die and be resurrected?
18. Following what and what leader of the Jews said that Jesus must die, lest the Romans take away their place and nation?
19. What good friends did Jesus have who lived at Bethany and were visited by him when he came to Jerusalem?
20. Where did Jesus specifically say he would meet his disciples after his resurrection?
21. When Christ was crucified, how long was there darkness over the land?
22. The truths of the death, burial and resurrection of Christ are called what by the apostle Paul?
23. After His resurrection, how many days did Jesus appear to his disciples off and on before he ascended back to heaven?
24. What two brothers of Jesus wrote books in the New Testament?
25. In giving the book of Revelation to John, what did Jesus call himself?

FROM ONE WHO KNEW HIM WELL



"Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners..." (1 Timothy 1:15).

Love Everyone Freely

DON'T BE afraid to love everyone freely, not showing partiality (acting as if there would not be enough love to go around). Real love is of such a nature that the more we love, the greater our capacity to love becomes. God's boundless love is so great that it is as if He loved only you, but the same love is for everyone. □



BARBS ...with a POINT

YOU have to live right to die right.

It is good to know the truth of God, but it is even better to know the God of truth.

A person is not a Christian unless he has become a Christian (Acts 2:36-41; Galatians 3:27), regardless how religious he may be.

If God is not first in your life, He is not in your life (Matthew 6:33; Deuteronomy 6:5; 1 Cor. 6:19,20).

A person may talk about baptism "for the remission of sins" all he wants to, but if he hasn't repented of his sins and trusted the Lord, remission of sins does not take place when he is baptized.

Take CHRIST out of CHRIST-ian and you have I-A-N left—I Am Nothing.

Don't let the devil use the thief on the cross to steal your salvation, thinking you can be saved without being baptized when his situation doesn't even apply to you (his situation is entirely different from ours today—Luke 23:43; Hebrews 9:16,17; Romans 6:2-5; Acts 2:37-40).

If you leave out part of God's plan of salvation, you forfeit your part in God's plan of salvation.

The fact that there is such a thing as hypocrites is a compliment to the superiority of Christianity, as something highly to be desired (but in the case of the hypocrites, only pretended).

People who "live it up" may have a hard time "living it down" (if they live that long).

You may travel near and far, but if you are not on the road that goes to heaven, you will never get there (John 14:6; Matthew 7:13, 14).

Heaven is a prepared place for a prepared people; hell is a prepared place for an unprepared people.

If everybody is "doing it," that is no reason for us to "do it," but it is a good reason for us to question whether we should be "doing it" (Matthew 7:13, 14; 1 John 5:19).

It is a strange phenomenon, but some who are the most zealous about their religion have the least to be zealous about.

If something is "cut and dried," it is usually dead; there is no life (and with some who think they have all the answers, and are not open to further study, the situation is the same).

The somber admonition of God is to "preach the Word" (2 Timothy 4:2), not give book reports.

It has been said that preachers "mellow" as they get older, but "mellow" in some cases is the last stage before becoming "rotten."

Much of modern music is not only noise pollution, it is moral pollution.

When family ties, blood ties and friendship ties are stronger than ties in the Lord and the blood of Christ, it can tie a lot of knots in the Lord's work.

A society controlled by humanism, with no higher authority, becomes a headless monster as far as direction and purpose are concerned.

People try to find fault with the Bible and discredit its teachings because its teachings find fault with their sinful lives (and they don't want to face up to it).

People don't like a bossy boss; so, if you are "too" assertive, beware.

The "official priests" in our modern, godless and secular society are the so-called scientists (the modern Gnostics, the "knowing ones"), before whom all are expected to unquestionably bow and do obeisance to the supposed infallible intellect of man (while at the same time ignoring or denying the Supreme Intellect that is behind everything).

The trials of life will either make you bitter or better; it's up to you. □



Disrupting the Process

DR. JOSEPH FORT NEWTON once told of an amateur naturalist who watched an emperor moth slowly making its laborious way from the chrysalis stage. Day after day it struggled and squirmed to emerge from its cocoon. Thinking to help the butterfly, he took his penknife and cut a large opening for it. The struggle was ended and the moth emerged. But its wings were imperfect, the body was weak. Being unable to make its way in its environment, it fluttered feebly until it died. He had robbed it of the privilege to grow strong and beautiful through struggle.

By being too kind and soft-hearted, the naturalist unwittingly harmed that which he wanted to help. Parents and teachers can do the same to their children or students if they fail to recognize that work and effort are a part of God's plan for achieving excellence.—*Denver Sizemore* □

Your Life Is Jesus to Someone

(Romans 14:7)

YOUR LIFE is Jesus to someone,
Though tattered and torn it may be.
Though often times weak and unstable,
You're all of God someone will see.

YOUR TONGUE is Jesus to someone.
That idle, insensitive word
Reflects to at least one searching heart
An idle, insensitive Lord.

YOUR GOALS are Jesus to someone.
What you put first, they believe,
Are the goals of God for the Christian
Your life is all they receive.

YOUR FAITHFULNESS — that's Jesus to someone.
Their judgment of how God is true,
Rests unquestionably in the faithfulness
They see day by day in you.

YOUR LOVE is Jesus to someone —
That someone who is seeking to know
That Jesus will follow and guide and
Befriend wherever in life they might go.

SO BEWARE lest others blaspheme God
By what you say or do,
For the only Jesus that someone knows
Is the Jesus they see in you.

— Author Unknown

ANSWERS to

Bible Questions Involving Christ

1. Genesis 3:15; 2. Genesis 12:1-3 (Genesis 22:18; Acts 3:25, 26); 3. Isaiah 53; 4. John; 5. Matthew and Luke; 6. Matthew, Mark and Luke; 7. Bethlehem (Luke 2:1-16; Matthew 2:1-10); Nazareth (Matthew 2:23; Luke 2:39-41, 51, 52; 4:16); Capernaum (Matthew 4:13); 8. John; 9. Three: (1) Baptism of Christ (Matthew 3:13-17); (2) The transfiguration (Matthew 17:1-8); (3) In Jerusalem (John 12:27-30); 10. Egypt (Matthew 2:13-21); Phoenicia (Tyre and Sidon) (Matthew 15:21-28; Mark 7:24-30); 11. John 2:1-11; 12. Matthew (Matthew 8:28-34; 20:29-34); 13. (1) Feeding of the 5000 (Matthew 14:15-21; Mark 6:31-45; Luke 9:7-17; John 6:1-14); (2) The resurrection of Christ—Matthew 28:1-8; Mark 16:1-9; Luke 24:1-12; John 20:1-31 (John 10:17-18; Luke 23:46); 14. (1) Jairus' daughter (Mark 5:22-43); (2) Widow of Nain's son (Luke 7:11-17); (3) Lazarus (John 11:1-45); 15. (1) Mark 5:1-20; (2) Matthew 21:17-20; 16. The Sabbath; 17. Matthew 16:13-21 (17:22,23; 20:17-19); 18. John 11:41-53; 19. Luke 10:38-42; John 11:1-5, 33-36; 20. Matthew 28:16 (26:32; 28:7, 10); 21. Luke 23:44; 22. 1 Corinthians 15:1-4; 23. Acts 1:3; 24. James and Jude; 25. Revelation 1:8,11; 21:6; 22:13. □

Reasons for Being a Christian

THERE IS no evidence that Agrippa ever became a Christian (Acts 26:28). There is even a question about his sincerity when he made the remark about "little persuasion." Many others since that time have questioned the value of becoming a Christian. They want to know what reason(s) there might be to take such a step. Let me share three GOOD reasons for one's being a Christian.

1. One's past.

"...for all have sinned, and fall short of the glory of God" (Rom. 3:23). "For the wages of sin is death; but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord" (Rom. 6:23).

2. One's present.

We have only the promise of this present time. What we would accomplish for now and eternity must be accomplished today.

"Come now, ye that say, Today or tomorrow we will go into this city, and spend a year there. . . ye know not what shall be on the morrow. . . ye are vapor that appeareth for a little time, and then vanisheth away" (James 4:13,14).

One's life should be enriched with joy now.

"...and he went on his way rejoicing" (Acts 8:39). "...and rejoiced greatly, with all his house, having believed in God" (Acts 16:34).

Both the eunuch's and the jailor's rejoicing came about because they were Christians. Such rejoicing comes because of the peace that accompanies Christianity.

"And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall guard your hearts and your thoughts in Christ Jesus" (Phil. 4:7).

It comes to us by promise from God, who cannot lie.

"...whereby He hath granted unto us His precious and exceeding great promises" (II Pet. 1:4).

3. One's future.

"And I saw the dead, the great and the small, standing before the throne...And if any was not found written in the book of life, he was cast into the lake of fire" (Rev. 20:12-15). "...what shall be the end of them that obey not the gospel of God" (I Peter 4:17). (See also Mark 8:36, 37; Matt. 25:31-46; Rev. 21.)

Yes, three very good reasons for being a Christian; and no good reasons for remaining out of Christ.—**Leroy Sedgwick** □

HIS CHURCH IS MARCHING ON

James E. Gibbons

(Battle Hymn of the Republic)

William Steffe

1. My ears have heard the sto-ry of the Christ up-on the cross, How he
 2. I have read it on the pag-es of the Ho - ly Word of God that the
 3. The church that Je-sus start-ed has en-dured the test of time; For the

gave him-self so free-ly for the church at such a cost; How with power the
 church that Je-sus pur-chased un-der foot of man was trod; For the one-ness
 gates of hell can-not pre-vail a-gainst this church di-vine, And the child-ren

church was start-ed on the day of Pen-te-cost; His church is march-ing on.
 of the pat-tern in the eyes of men is odd; His church is march-ing on.
 of this king-dom will some day the sun out-shine; His church is march-ing on.

CHORUS

Praise the Lord, O hal-le-lu-jah! Praise the Lord, O hal-le-lu-jah! His church is march-ing on.

Copyright, James E. Gibbons, 1988

HIS CHURCH IS MARCHING ON

*My ears have heard the story of the Christ upon the cross,
 How he gave himself so freely for the church at such a cost;
 How with power the church was started on the day of Pentecost;
 His church is marching on.*

*I have read it on the pages of the Holy Word of God
 That the church that Jesus purchased under feet of men was trod;
 For the oneness of the pattern in the eyes of men is odd;
 His church is marching on.*

*The church that Jesus started has endured the test of time;
 For the gates of hell cannot prevail against this church divine,
 And the children of the kingdom will some day the sun outshine;
 His church is marching on.*

CHORUS:

*Praise the Lord, O hallelujah! Praise the Lord, O hallelujah!
 His church is marching on.*

Get This Hymn About the Church

This hymn was written several years ago by the editor of *The Sword and Staff*. It is sung to the tune of the "Battle Hymn of the Republic" (the tune is public domain). The words are expressive of great truths about the Lord's church, and the song is laced with optimism about the ultimate victory of this church. It is printed on paper that has glue made into the back. The single sheet can be stuck into the back of your hymnbooks for ready use. There is no charge. Let us know how many you want.

Epilogue:

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

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

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

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

Answers to: BIBLE QUESTIONS

1. Genesis 17:12; Luke 1:59; 2:21;
2. Genesis 25:12-16; 3. Exodus 2:1-4; Hebrews 11:23; 4. Exodus 15:8; 5. Job (31 times) and the rest of the Bible 11 times; 6. Proverbs 6:16-19; 7. Psalms 20:7; 33:17; Revelation 6:2,4,5,8; 8. Hosea 4:16; 9. Habakkuk 3:17,18; 10. Daniel and Ezekiel; 11. Esther 9:20-22; Nehemiah 8:10-12 (read context); Revelation 11:10 (read context); 12. Matthew 4:13; 9:1; 13. Matthew 4:18-20; 14. Matthew 13:1-52; 15. Luke 13:31,32; 16. Matthew 23; 17. (1) Judas—Matthew 27:3-5; (2) Zimri—1 Kings 16:15-20; (3) Ahithophel—2 Samuel 17:1-24; (4) Saul—1 Samuel 31:1-6; (5) Samson—Judges 16:28-30; 18. Acts 6:8; 19. Luke 8:3; Acts 13:1; Acts 26:27-29; 20. Acts 21:16.

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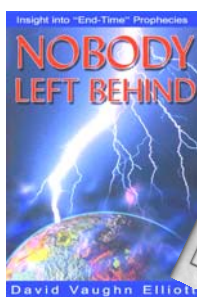
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