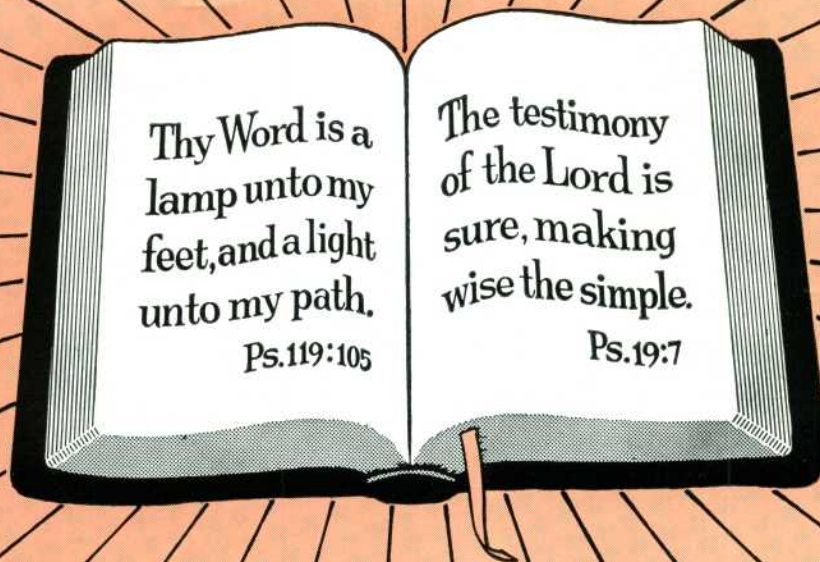


Megiddo Message

DEVOTED TO THE CAUSE OF CHRIST



That Tongue!

"Lord, I Talk Too Much"

CALEB: Man of the Mountains
On Mores and Morals

WATCH! The Judge Is at the Door

THE Bible has some special warnings for those who would live to see the last minutes of the day. They are urgent appeals to maintain proper attitudes, to avoid divisive judgments and ill feelings toward one another—lest the great day come upon some unawares.

“Grudge not one against another, brethren, lest ye be condemned,” is one such warning. Note the reason: “Behold, the judge standeth before the door” (Jas. 5:9). In the same context is another warning, paraphrased well in the *Living Bible*: “Don’t criticize and speak evil about each other, dear brothers. If you do, you will be fighting against God’s law of loving one another, declaring it wrong. But your job is not to decide whether this law is right or wrong, but to obey it. Only he who made the law can rightly judge among us. He alone decides to save us or destroy. So what right do you have to judge or criticize others?” (Jas. 4:11-12, LB).

To grudge is to complain or murmur, to criticize unnecessarily, to find fault spitefully. Our grudge may be expressed in the spitefulness that delights to inflict a sting upon another. Or it may be ill will or a desire to injure or hinder. Or it might be just an attitude, unexpressed but ever felt. We ought to be afraid of all such evil speakings and critical attitudes. “Who art thou that judgest another man’s servant? To his own master he standeth or falleth.”

Our un-Christlike attitudes may have far-reaching influence; they may cause others to stumble. The Lord God says plainly that all such must be put away. “Let all bitterness, and wrath, and anger, and clamour, and evil speaking, be put away from you, with all malice: and be ye kind one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ’s sake hath forgiven you” (Eph. 4:31-32). If we are guilty of any of these, unless we repent and show a complete change of heart, the result will be sorrow to us at the day of Judgment.

Can we identify each of these in our own lives?

Bitterness is acrimony that eats into our spirit like a corrosive acid because of a deep-rooted ill will toward another.

Wrath is a settled cruelty of attitude, an active

desire to hurt. It never works God’s righteousness.

Anger is a violent, vindictive outburst, personal and usually selfish. Or it may be a low, smoldering coal of impatience, felt but barely expressed.

Clamor implies noisy reiteration, a repetition of caustic and incisive criticism against the character of another.

Evil speaking implies the corrupt speech that debases the speaker more than the person spoken of. It is the conversation designed to be detrimental, and is often as incorrect as injurious, mean, mischievous and unprincipled; certainly unprofitable to the speaker and to the cause of Christ.

What a worthwhile exchange, to put away all these and instead be “kind one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving.”

Anticipating our Lord’s coming, we are admonished strongly not to be smiting our fellow servants like the evil servant (Matt. 24: 48-51). He was more intent on smiting another than on looking for his lord’s return. The warning is a very serious one. The meaning is dreadful. How easily we may allow ourselves to be dominated by un-Christian attitudes and criticisms. And as committed servants of God we will have to answer for these. The final decision of our fate rests with Him who searches the heart and tries the reins, to give every man according to the fruit of his doings.

In view of our Lord’s imminent return, how concerned we ought to be to encourage and edify one another. Our energies should be directed to that which is helpful and constructive to fellow believers. We are to exhort, not excoriate; to build up, not batter down; to rebuke with meekness, not ridicule with assumed superiority. We are to restore a brother in Christ with the result that both of us may be more ready for our Lord’s return. We must correct another without condemning ourselves.

The Judge stands before the door. Will ours be the blessedness of the faithful servant who was ready for his lord’s return, or the condemnation of the cruel servant who was intent on mistreating his fellows?

The Judge is at the door. It is time to do justly, love mercy, and walk humbly before God. ●●

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Megiddo Means

"a place of troops"

—Gesenius' Hebrew Lexicon

"a place of God"

—Young's Analytical Concordance

Geographically, Megiddo was and is a town in Palestine, located at a strategic point, demanding heavy fortification; for Palestine is the age-old gateway between East and West, and the avenue connecting North and South. Supremacy there has long been the envy of aggressive nations, and the prevailing power has guarded it with jealous eye. The famous pass at Megiddo through a solid mountain range is the one means by which this avenue between continents may be traversed.

In the spiritual parallel, it is a place of troops, where soldiers are equipped for spiritual warfare against the forces of evil without and within. "The weapons we wield are not merely human but divinely potent to demolish strongholds; we demolish sophistries and all that rears its proud head against the knowledge of God; we compel every human thought to surrender in obedience to Christ" (II Cor. 10:4-5, NEB).

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The Sins of the Tongue

THE Bible has much to say about the sins of the tongue. James writes: "The tongue is a fire, a world of iniquity: so is the tongue among our members, that it defileth the whole body, and setteth on fire the course of nature; and it is set on fire of hell" (Jas. 3:6). And he warns, "For every kind of beasts, and of birds, and of serpents, and of things in the sea, is tamed, and hath been tamed of mankind: but the tongue can no man tame; it is an unruly evil, full of deadly poison" (Jas. 3:7-8).

When a man gives way to anger and loses control of his tongue, he is committing sin.

Anger has many varieties—indignation, irritation, impatience, vexation, bitterness, exasperation, resentment, passion, temper, wrath, rage, pouting, carrying a grudge—and these are expressed in all sorts of ill-tempered words ranging from the cold acid of sarcasm to the hot flame of fury. God condemns them all, and says they are sin in His sight. Every expression of anger, even the most noble form of indignation, is full of danger.

Someone has said that if you are in the right, you need not lose your temper; and if you are in the wrong, you can't afford to.

Angry words never improved any situation. Solomon, called the world's wisest man, declared that one slow to wrath demonstrates great understanding, but a quick-tempered man displays his own foolishness (Prov. 14:29). And in Proverbs 27:4 we read, "Wrath is cruel, and anger is outrageous." Jesus said, "Whosoever is angry with his brother* . . . shall be in danger of the judgment: . . . and whosoever shall say, Thou fool, shall be in danger of hell fire" (Matt. 5:22).

* This verse is rendered in the KJV, "Whosoever is angry with his brother without a cause shall be," etc., but the phrase "without a cause" has been added; it is not part of the original manuscripts and is omitted in most of the newer versions. Jesus was not justifying anger that had a cause; he was saying that anger, from any cause whatsoever, is wrong.

FACE THE FACTS

People may excuse their bad temper in various ways. Some among the more carnal are actually somewhat proud of their uncontrolled spirit. Others attribute bad temper to nerves, making an infirmity out of a sin. It is far better to admit the sin, to repent and confess and forsake it, and to make humble apology for it.

Another sin of the tongue that is common throughout America is profanity. The Third Commandment states, "Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord thy God in vain; for the Lord will not hold him guiltless that taketh his name in vain" (Ex. 20:7). One of the nauseating things throughout America today is the swearing, cursing, and taking the name of God in vain. Many political leaders and men in high places are given to cursing and swearing. In college and university classrooms many professors are guilty of taking the name of God in vain, setting a poor example to their students.

People may swear to shock others, or to be mean, or to hide an inferiority complex, or just to show off. But the Scripture says, "Let no evil talk come out of your mouths, but only such as is good for edifying, as fits the occasion, that it may impart grace to those who hear" (Eph. 4:29, RSV).

The Bible teaches that a man who can control his tongue can control his whole personality. If you cannot control your tongue in this matter of swearing, the Bible teaches that you are in bondage, and it is a sin for which God will hold you accountable. The English language has the richest vocabulary in the world; there is no need for anyone to be verbally crippled and to hobble along with questionable crutch-words that show a disdain for God.

OTHER TYPES OF PROFANITY

Many professing Christians are guilty of a subtle form of profanity. A number of common slang ex-

pressions are actually disguised swearing.

Furthermore, if we sing hymns of praise to God thoughtlessly or mechanically, we are really taking His name in vain.

Another sin of the tongue that is prevalent throughout the world, and is the root of many of our troubles, is the sin of lying. The law of Moses condemned false witness. "Put not thine hand with the wicked to be an unrighteous witness" (Ex. 23: 1); "thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbour" (Ex. 20:16). The Lord told Moses and the children of Israel directly not to lie to one another (Lev. 19:11). The apostle Paul echoes the same words: "Do not lie to one another" (Col. 3: 9, RSV). The entire Bible condemns lying as one of the worst sins. It puts lying alongside of murder and adultery.

Lying is found in the realms of business and politics and social intercourse. How many people speak without a blush of the lies they have told for their own advantage. Many professing Christians are guilty of lying. Some people will make a sincere effort not to tell a lie; but if circumstances prove embarrassing, many will not hesitate to lie their way out of a difficulty and consider it the lesser of two evils—the other evil, in their opinion, being the consequences of admitting the truth. The Christian is told to avoid lying and to distrust those who practice it.

DESIGNED DECEPTION

Many people have asked me what a lie really is. Someone has well said, "A lie is any species of designed deception. If the deception be not designed, it is not lying; but if you design to make an impression contrary to the naked truth, you lie." How innumerable are the falsehoods perpetrated every day in business and in social relationships. By words, looks and actions men design to make an impression that is contrary to the truth.

If you are guilty of lying, I pray to God you will confess it and turn from it today. The Bible warns that "a false witness shall not be unpunished, and he that speaketh lies shall not escape" (Prov. 19:5). Jesus said, "Out of the heart proceed evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witness, blasphemies; these are the things which defile a man" (Matt. 15:19). In other words, Jesus put lying alongside of all these other terrible sins.

BEFORE YOU CRITICIZE

Another sin of the tongue that is prevalent

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among Christians is the sin of criticism—going around and trying to take a speck out of our brother's eye when we have a log in our own. Jesus said, "Judge not, that you be not judged. For with the judgment you pronounce you will be judged, and the measure you give will be the measure you get" (Matt. 7:1-2, RSV). And in the same chapter we read, "You hypocrite, first take the log out of your own eye, and then you will see clearly to take the speck out of your brother's eye" (Matt. 7:5, RSV). This advice from Christ does not mean that we should condone evil, but that we should deal with wrongdoing in our own lives first.

There are many people who would not dare do certain worldly things, and yet they are filled with pride, gossiping, malice, and sins of the spirit that are just as worldly and evil in God's sight as some of these outward things. Worldliness is anything that comes between the Christian and God.

Another sin of the tongue is grumbling. The Bible says, "Do all things without grumbling or questioning" (Phil. 2:14, RSV). The only cure I have ever found for grumbling is prayer and praise.

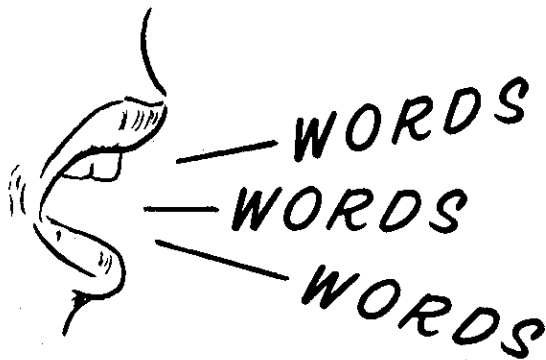
EXAMPLES

Consider our Lord. If anyone ever had a right to grumble it was He. Instead, He prayed for those who crucified Him, saying: "Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do" (Luke 23:34).

Peter writes: "Who, when he was reviled, reviled not again; when he suffered, he threatened not; but committed himself to him that judgeth righteously" (1 Pet. 2:23).

The apostle Paul wrote Philippians, the "joy

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TAME That Tongue

PRAYER

Loving Father, we thank Thee that we can have our minds refreshed on the things that we must do to obtain a life that will eternally endure.

We appreciate Thy foresight in providing us with life's day in which to prepare for the world to come. Help us to make practical use of this time given us, and no longer dream or drift or procrastinate. May we be imbued with a feeling of urgency, aware that now is the time to work.

We thank Thee that we have been given expanded vision, broader interests, deeper insights, more worthy concerns, a new sense of values, and a new sense of our duty to others.

Help us to cultivate a spirit of brotherliness, to put affection into our love for the brotherhood. May we be ready to speak a word of cheer to the downhearted, to inspire faith where it is lacking; to speak a word of encouragement to the disheartened, a word of caution to the overconfident, and a kind word of reproof to our erring brother.

May we have the courage to speak when it is our duty to speak, and the wisdom to refrain from speaking when silence would be golden. May we aspire to do great things, and may we be aware that the greatest human accomplishment is to rule the tongue.

Help us not to underestimate the power-potential of the spoken word; it can be the greatest of forces either for good or evil. The tongue can either make or break us eternally. It can be a world of iniquity among our members, setting on fire the round wheel of existence. Or if bridled, the resultant fitly spoken word can grace our lips as apples of gold in pictures of silver. Help us, then, to tame the unruly tongue, to bridle it, control it, and never allow it to control us.

Be with us in this service, and may it be productive of much good. Be with those who would desire to be with us this morning but are unable.

Forgive us for the sins we have turned from and forsaken, and give us strength to continue steadfast to the end, that we may gain a full reward in the everlasting Kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, in whose worthy name we pray. Amen.

DISCOURSE

In contrast to much of Paul's deep, theological discussion, the book of James is exceedingly practical. The writer focuses the attention of his brethren on the real essentials of Christian conduct, especially that "little member that boasteth great things." James has been called "the great Biblical specialist on the tongue," for he devotes almost one whole chapter out of the five in his Epistle to speech control. The subject is vital, for, said Jesus, "By thy words thou shalt be justified, and by thy words thou shalt be condemned" (Matt. 12:37).

The following article is an edited distillation of a verse-by-verse discussion of James 3 by our former pastor and first editor of the Megiddo Message, Rev. Maud Hembree, who, applying these texts to the problems of our daily lives, gleaned many profitable and instructive lessons.

WE ALL HAVE heard the expression that "the most dangerous point in the world is the tip of the tongue." Most of the trouble in the world is caused directly or indirectly by the tongue. Misunderstandings between individuals, between groups, or between nations frequently occur because man has not learned to rule that fluid little member, the tongue.

James, the zealous servant of God, recognized this human deficiency: "We all make many a slip, but whoever avoids slips of speech is a perfect man; he can bridle the whole body as well as the tongue" (Jas. 3:2, Moffatt). The tongue is so unruly—and we all share the same problem. If we do not realize it, if we do not realize how often our unruly tongue has ruled and governed us, we will never attain that perfect character which will be acceptable to God. That is why James warns us to be careful of our speech: "Wherefore, my beloved brethren, let every man be swift to hear, slow to speak, slow to wrath" (James 1:19).

"For in many things we offend all. If any man offend not in word, the same is a perfect man, and able to bridle the whole body." A well-governed tongue reveals a mind that has been brought into subjection. Before the tongue can be fully con-

trolled, the mind must be right, for "out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh" (Matt. 12:34). Thoughts of evil, perverse thoughts will come into our minds, but it is our Christian duty to learn to control them, to learn not to communicate them. We may have to bite the tongue to keep it from speaking, but every time we control it we are gaining, we are overcoming; we are on the way to a spiritual victory.

Control Illustrated

"We put bridles into the mouths of horses to make them obey us, and so you see, we can move the whole of their bodies" (Jas. 3:3, Moffatt). Lest someone should wish to argue that the tongue is too small a part of the body to cause concern, James illustrates. We know that if we put a bit in the horse's mouth, we can control its whole body. How often in pre-automobile days when in the West we had to work and work and work to get the bit into the horse's mouth. We first had to catch the horse, and hold him. And how he would toss his head! We had to work to get the bridle on. But once the bridle was on, we could lead or drive him wherever we wished. The bridle controlled him.

How difficult it is to put on the bridle of God's truth! How often we have tossed our head and refused, but this is the bridle of which James is speaking. Sometimes the bridling process is quite painful. But the Lord has furnished the bridle, and we must put it on. Just as "we put bridles into the mouths of horses to make them obey us" and to "move the whole of their bodies," so the Word of God will control our whole bodies—when we get that bridle on.

James then uses another illustration:

"Look at ships too; for all their size and speed under stiff winds, they are turned by a tiny rudder wherever the mind of the steersman chooses."

I thought of that often when we were on our mission steamer, *Megiddo*. Just a slight movement of the pilot wheel directed our whole course. So we must turn—whithersoever the Master says we should move. The mind has been called the "charioteer and steersman of a man's life." The mind controls every word and emotion of life, and when the mind is itself controlled by the mind of Christ, that life is safe.

"So the tongue is a small member of the body, but it can boast of great exploits!" (Jas. 3:5, Moffatt). Yes, how it loves to boast! We can see it in humanity the world over; we can see it in ourselves—if we look for it. Touch someone's pride and how quickly you can see it. Laud somebody,

and how it inflates his ego, if he is governed by the natural mind.

A World of Iniquity

"What a forest is set ablaze by a little spark of fire! And the tongue is a fire, the tongue proves a very world of mischief among our members, staining the whole of the body and setting fire to the round circle of existence with a flame fed by hell" (Jas. 3:6-7, Moffatt). The King James Bible reads, "And the tongue is a fire, a world of iniquity: so is the tongue among our members, that it defileth the whole body, and setteth on fire the course of nature; and it is set on fire of hell [destruction]" (v. 6). We must learn to watch our tongue, to see what it is doing. If we earnestly desire eternal life, we will; we will realize what a deadly member we have right in our physical being. We will be watching it as we would watch a deadly enemy, or a forest fire that was endangering our home.

"The tongue is a world of iniquity." Why? Because it attempts to *justify* and *exalt* and *excuse* and *defend* and *gloss over iniquity*. How many times we have done this, have used our tongue to defend the world of iniquity in our own lives. We should remember that the tongue is "kindled with the very fire of hell [destruction]." Here indeed is the terror of the tongue.

If we could become alarmed, become afraid of our own individual selves, we would be watchful. "The tongue proves a very world of mischief among our members" (v. 6). It takes only a spark, only a word to kindle such a destructive fire. "The tongue proves a very world of mischief among our members, staining the whole of the body and setting fire to the round circle of existence." We need to turn back and look at our lives to see how we have been using this organ of speech. Is ours like a two-edged sword cutting right and left? Is it a fire that burns and consumes? The tongue is a terrible member if uncontrolled, and when only partially controlled, it is still bad.

The Tongue—A Fire

The damage the tongue can cause is like the damage caused by a forest fire, a picture that is common in the Bible. Isaiah sees the picture of "wickedness [burning] as the fire; it shall devour the briars and thorns, and shall kindle in the thickets of the forest" (Isa. 9:18). Zechariah speaks of "a hearth of fire among the wood, and like a torch of fire in a sheaf" (Zech. 12:6). Palestine had a long dry season each year, when the scanty grass and

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Scripture tells us what a deadly weapon we have right in our own mouths.

"The tongue . . . is an unruly evil, full of deadly poison" (Jas. 3:8).

"Thy tongue deviseth mischiefs; like a sharp razor, working deceitfully" (Ps. 52:2).

"In the multitude of words there wanteth not sin" (Prov. 10:19).

"He that keepeth his mouth keepeth his life: but he that openeth wide his lips shall have destruction" (Prov. 13:3).

"Death and life are in the power of the tongue: and they that love it shall eat the fruit thereof" (Prov. 18:21).

"Surely the serpent will bite without enchantment; and a babblers is no better" (Eccl. 10:11).

" . . . Every idle word that men shall speak, they shall give account thereof in the day of judgment. For by thy words thou shalt be justified, and by thy words thou shalt be condemned" (Matt. 12:36-37).

"If any man among you seem to be religious, and bridleth not his tongue, . . . this man's religion is vain" (Jas. 1:26).

"The tongue is a fire, a world of iniquity" (Jas. 3:6).

"Lord, I Talk Too Much"

WOULD you like to develop the art of carefulness in conversation? or simply, would you like to master it?

Here is a plan of action:

Step One: Acknowledge your problem.

Begin by stating your problem frankly to yourself: "My tongue is unruly." No generalization, no broad sweeping statements about everybody's number one weakness. This problem is *mine*.

Then acknowledge your problem before God in honest prayer. "Lord, I talk too much. I cause myself so much unnecessary trouble, just because I do not say the right thing at the right time. Help me to gain control of this little member."

Step Two: Understand the problem.

The tongue is actually an innocent organ under the command of the real offender: the brain. Consciously or unconsciously, we always think before we speak. The real culprit is not the tongue but the thoughts and attitudes behind it.

Before we can control the tongue, then, we must control our thoughts and attitudes.

If we would keep ourselves from saying the wrong thing, we must first learn to keep ourselves from *thinking* about the wrong thing. Tongue con-

trol follows thought control. That is why the apostle Paul wrote of his battle with his thoughts: "The truth is that, although we lead normal human lives, the battle we are fighting is on the spiritual level. . . . We fight to capture every thought until it acknowledges the authority of Christ" (II Cor. 10:5, Phillips).

What practical method might we use in learning to control our thoughts?

Try this: Read what you consider an especially meaningful passage of Scripture in the morning. Think about different ways in which the message of those words can affect your life *that day*. Then write down two or three thoughts which impress you. During the day, when your mind is not concentrating on what you are doing, try to recall one or two of these thoughts. When your mind tends to wander to this and that and not much of anything, try to recall your morning thoughts. Remind yourself often that you and your little activities are not the center of the universe; God is. And the nearer to Him your mind can dwell, the more control you will have—both of your thoughts and of your words.

Step Three: Hold In!

Blurting out the first words that come to mind is bad practice in any department of life. Train

(Continued on page 23)

CALEB: Man of the Mountains

CALEB was no ordinary man. Born a prince, of the tribe of Judah, during the days when the Israelites were yet slaves in Egypt, he appears to have been acquainted with Israel's God from an early age, and he was active all during the years of Israel's wanderings in the wilderness—and beyond. When we realize how active he was, it is surprising to note that Caleb was not even a pure-blooded Israelite; his father was a Kenezite. But all through the account Caleb was accepted on an equal basis with other Israelites, a fact which shows God's justice and fair dealing. God's chief concern was never nationality or descent, but character.

And Caleb was a man of proven character. Six times it is written of Caleb: "He hath fully followed the Lord." What magnificent description the Bible gives to this man Caleb. He followed faithfully, fully, wholly. Caleb was a man of God, dedicated, perpetually loyal, unfaltering even through old age.

The first we hear of Caleb is at the time the Lord called Moses to send men, one from each tribe, "every one a ruler among" them to go and serve as spies for the Israelite people. Their mission: to survey the land of promise, its possibilities for habitation, cultivation, and conquest. Moses' command to the spies was: "Go northward into the hill country . . . and see what the land is like, see also what the people are like who live there, whether they be strong or weak, many or few; and whether the land is fertile or not; and what cities there are, and whether they are villages or are fortified; whether the land is rich or poor, and whether there are many trees. Don't be afraid, and bring back some samples of the crops you see" (Num. 13:17-24, Living Bible).

It must have been great adventure for these twelve Israelites to travel in the country where their forefathers had lived and died. Theirs was the privilege of seeing firsthand some of the places they had heard about since they could remember—the cave of Machpelah, where the patriarchs and their wives lay buried, Abraham and Sarah, Isaac and Rebecca, Jacob and Leah. The men recalled the stories they had always heard, about the great faith and character of these godly people.

But their reminiscing ended abruptly when sud-

denly they encountered some of the people now inhabiting this land. They were giants—absolute giants! the children of Anak!

When the spies returned to the camp of Israel, they had plenty of samples to show of the plenteous land—figs and pomegranates, and a huge bunch of delicious grapes. All agreed that it was a magnificent country, a "land flowing with milk and honey."

But that was less than half the story. When it came to describing the people and the possibilities of conquest, the spies divided, ten against two. The ten told of the horrors of the invincible giants they had seen. "The people living there are powerful, and their cities are fortified and very large; and what's more, we saw Anakim giants there! The land is full of warriors, the people are powerfully built, and we saw some of the Anakim there, descendants of the ancient race of giants. We felt like grasshoppers before them, they were so tall."

Caleb and Joshua disagreed. There was no foe, they were confident, too great for the Lord to overcome. "Let us go up at once and possess it," they cried, "for we are well able to conquer it."

But the evil report of the ten spies had excited the people beyond the point of sane reasoning, and "their voices rose in a great chorus of complaint against Moses and Aaron. 'Let's elect a leader to take us back to Egypt,' they shouted."

At this, Moses and Aaron fell to the ground and Joshua and Caleb rent their clothing. In one last attempt to convince the people, Joshua and Caleb spoke to the congregation. "It is a wonderful country ahead. He [the Lord] will bring us safely in the land and give it to us. . . . Oh, do not rebel against the Lord and do not fear the people of the land. . . . The Lord is with us and He has removed his protection from them! Don't be afraid of them!" But the only response of the people was to talk of stoning Joshua and Caleb.

If God had not shown His power at this time, we might have had no further history of Caleb and Joshua. The congregation might have carried out their plans to kill these two innocent, God-fearing men.

When Moses pleaded for mercy and pardon for the disobedient congregation, God decreed that they must go back and wander in the wilderness

for forty years, a year for each day that the spies were in the Promised Land. God also revealed that every one twenty years old and upward would perish during the years of wandering—with two exceptions: “But my servant Caleb is a different kind of man—he has obeyed me fully. I will bring him into the land he entered as a spy, and his descendants shall have their full share in it.” The other man especially singled out for favor was Joshua, who also followed the Lord. The rest would perish by their stubbornness, disobedience and rebellion; the Promised Land would be for the new generation.

The next we hear of Caleb is forty-five years later, after the years in the wilderness were ended, after Moses had brought the people safely through and had died and Joshua had assumed the leadership. We find Caleb with a delegation from the tribe of Judah speaking to Joshua.

“Remember what the Lord said to Moses about you and me when we were at Kadesh-barnea? I was forty-years old at the time, and Moses had sent us from Kadesh-barnea to spy out the land of Canaan. I reported what I felt was the truth, but our brothers who went with us frightened the people and discouraged them from entering the Promised Land. But since I had followed the Lord my God, Moses told me, ‘The section of Canaan you were just in, shall belong to you and your descendants forever. . . . So I’m asking that you give me the hill country which the Lord promised me. You will remember that as spies we found the Anakim living there in great walled cities, but if the Lord is with me I shall drive them out of the land’ ” (Joshua 14:7-9, 12-14, TLB).

After all these years, Caleb was still brave and stouthearted. Imagine this eighty-five year-old man asking Joshua for land—and not average, commonplace land at that. “Give me this mountain,” he said, and it was a mountain filled with hostile Anakims which had yet to be conquered! “I am as strong now as I was when Moses sent us on that journey,” he said, “and I can still travel and fight as well as I could then!”

How wonderfully God had blessed the man who had followed Him fully! The promise Moses had made him in God’s name was that he should have this mountain, Hebron, the very mountain the ten spies had called invincible, with its city garrisoned by giants. Caleb was fearless when he first saw it, and now, forty-five years later, he was still fearless.

Joshua had already conquered the city of Hebron (Josh. 10:37), but the mountain which belonged to it was still inhabited by the sons of Anak. There was no doubt at all in Caleb’s mind about his

ability, with the help of God, to possess the land.

Joshua granted Caleb’s request and gave him Hebron for a permanent inheritance because he had followed the Lord God of Israel.

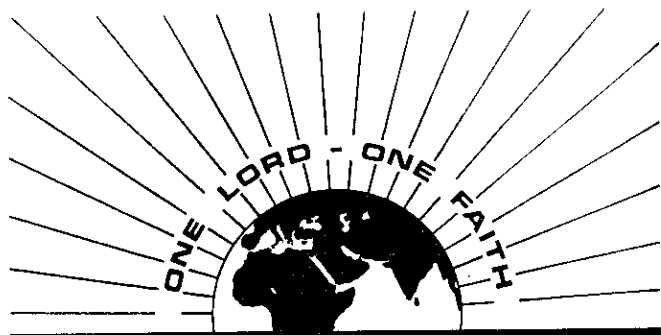
Caleb was a man of the mountains. He aspired to the mountain of Hebron as his earthly inheritance, but he learned to be God’s mountaineer in his everyday life. Caleb was a man of altitudes, because his confidence was in God. At the time he returned as one of the twelve spies, Caleb did not deny that there were giants in the land, but he knew that God had promised the land to the Israelites and he was completely confident that “we are well able to conquer it.” Caleb wasn’t the kind of person who sees only obstacles. He looked above, to the great God whose power never fails.

In his daily life, you would never find Caleb among the murmurers and complainers in Israel. He was far up on the mount of holiness, serving God faithfully. The giants of sin with which he contended in his own life are the same that we have today, giants of pride, impatience, evil thoughts, covetousness. These have always been giants to be conquered. Cowards approach them with fear, and are defeated. Caleb did not think this way. His love was for the mountain heights, even the high pinnacle of perfection, and he kept striving for the top. His faith was firm and his determination inexhaustible.

Caleb learned to live as God directed, even to the highest degree possible, because of his love for the mountain of perfect character before God.

Is this our love, too? Can we be called, like Caleb, *man of the mountains*? ●●

Just where you stand in the conflict,
 There is your place.
 Just where you think you are useless,
 Hide not your face.
 God placed you there for a purpose,
 What’e’r it be;
 Think He has chosen you for it;
 Work loyally.
 Gird on your armor! Be faithful
 At toil or rest!
 What’e’r it be, never doubting
 God’s way is best.
 Out in the fight or on picket,
 Stand firm and true;
 This is the work which your Master
 Gives you to do.



Of Life and Death

All of us are basically alike. We have the same general needs and can perform the same basic functions. We share one common gift: life.

But whether you live in the Northern or Southern Hemisphere, the Eastern or Western World, you know that life—at least, life as we know it—is a temporary, limited thing. Sooner or later, all men die, in the natural course of events.

What is this mysterious property we call life, this indescribable something that makes us differ from the rocks and sand and stones under our feet?

And what about the state of non-life, which we call death?

God has told us much about these subjects in His written Word, the Bible. We will go to the Bible for our learning.

WHETHER we speak Greek or Hindi, Russian or English, our communication centers around the verb of life itself. In English we call it "to be." How easily we say, "I am" such-and-such; or "He was" so-and-so. The various forms of this common little verb just fill our language every day. "We are," "they have been," "you will be," etc. This is because we *are*, and everything we are concerned with is part of our world of existence.

Where did this existence come from? What is the source of this mysterious property we call life?

Each of us is a living, moving, self-sustaining organism. We come into this world not by any work or planning of our own but by marvelous laws God has set in motion. Through the working of these divinely ordained laws, we are products of His creation.

All through the Bible, God makes it plain that He is the source of our life. He is our Creator. "I have made the earth, and created man upon it"

(Isa. 45:12). He is the "fountain of life" (Ps. 36:9). In Him we live and move and have our being (Acts 17:28). He "giveth to all life, and breath, and all things"; He "made the world and all things therein" (Acts 17:24-25).

Life versus Death

But there is another fact just as real as life. That is the cessation of life, the state which we call death. In this present arrangement, no life is permanent. Life is a gift from God for a limited amount of time. Soon or late, by natural or physical causes, life ends. What then?

Whatever religion or creed or philosophy you have espoused, you have given some thought to the possibility of life after death. Quite likely you have, or have had, some idea of some form of continued existence. There is something about you—personality or soul or spirit or something—which in some form lives on when the body dies. This conclusion is part of just about every religion known to man.

It is difficult for us to think of total cessation of one's being.

Belief in immortality is as old as the human race. It arose from man's inborn fear of the unknown. Life, he reasoned, was too marvelous a thing to have an end. And so he worshiped it and told himself that it lived on forever.

But what says the Bible about the state of a man after he dies?

The dead know not anything. "The living know that they shall die: but the dead know not anything, neither have they any more a reward;... also their love, and their hatred, and their envy, is now perished; neither have they any more a portion for ever in any thing that is done under the sun" (Eccl. 9:5-6). When a man dies, he has no knowledge of what happens or has happened. He has no more love, or hate, or envy. All ceases when life ends.

Men are mortal.

The Bible says in plain words that men are mortal. "Shall mortal man be more just than God?" (Job 4:17).

Man continues not. "Man that is born of a woman is of few days, and full of trouble. He cometh forth like a flower, and is cut down: he fleeth also as a shadow, and continueth not" (Job 14:1-2).

Man's life is as a vapor, "even a vapour, that appeareth for a little time, and then vanisheth away" (Jas. 4:14).

In death, a man's thoughts perish. "His breath goeth forth, he returneth to his earth; in that very

day his thoughts perish" (Ps. 146:4).

Death is a sleep. It is recorded of many of the kings of Judah and Israel that when they died they "slept" with their fathers. Jesus said of Lazarus, when someone told Him that Lazarus was dead, "He sleepeth." Death is as a deep sleep; the person in death knows nothing, just as the person in a deep sleep knows nothing.

Someone may say that all this is right, that the body does die; it knows nothing; it perishes; but, they say, there is *something* that lives on—soul or spirit or personality.

This is a subject about which we can have no knowledge outside the written word of God, for none of us have ever experienced the state of death: to be able to report about it.

What does the Bible say about the "soul" of man?

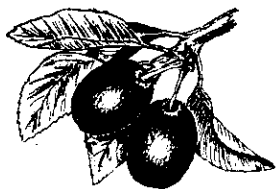
"The soul that sinneth, it shall die" (Ezek. 18:20). Souls die. The soul, as used in the Bible, refers to the whole being, the person: "a living creature;

a person, sometimes applied to animals; life; beasts; body; breath; creature; man; mind," etc., according to the Hebrew Lexicon. "Soul" is not used of some immortal part of a person.

Neither is "spirit" used of some part of a person which escapes at death to live on. The two terms, "soul" and "spirit," in fact, are used over sixteen hundred times in the Bible, and not once is either called immortal, undying, deathless, or perpetual. Souls die, and the spirit is the breath, the vital principle of life manifest in breathing through the nostrils, the property of life which God gives and which returns to the vast reservoir of atmosphere surrounding our earth when a man dies. "The breath of the Almighty hath given me life," wrote Job, and "if he gather unto himself his spirit and his breath; all flesh shall perish together, and man shall turn again unto dust" (Job 33:4; 34:14-15). A man is alive, as Job says again, "all the while my breath is in me, and the spirit of God is in my nostrils" (Job 27:3). The spirit is the breath; it vivifies both man and beast. And when a man or an animal ceases to breathe, he ceases to live. ●●

Fruitful

Fragments



There are two ways you can spread the light: You can be the candle that makes it shine, or you can be the mirror that reflects it.

Many a man thinks he is buying pleasure, when he is really selling himself a slave to it.

Success is getting the things you want. Happiness is in wanting the things you get.

Why are the saints, saints? Because they were cheerful when it was difficult to be cheerful; patient when it was difficult to be patient; because they pushed on when they wanted to stand still, and kept silent when they wanted to talk, and were agreeable when they wanted to be disagreeable. That was all.

Temperament we are born with; character we must make.

The man who has begun to live more seriously within begins to live more simply without.

The past must be our guidepost, not our hitching post.

Sometimes only a change of viewpoint can convert a tiresome duty into an interesting opportunity.

The highest reward for a man's toil is not what he gets for it, but what he becomes by it.

Morale is when your hands and feet keep on working when your head says it just can't be done.

*I'm but a cog in life's vast wheel
That daily makes the same old trip.
Yet what a joy it is to feel
That I can help another on.
'Tis something, after all, to be
A first-class cog.*

UNDERSTANDING THE BIBLE

"Study to shew thyself approved unto God."

The Mosaic Law

THE MOST prominent characteristic of the Mosaic law was its humanism. It was a system under which high ideals and high moral standards were dominant. Justice and kindness were its keynotes. No one was to be hardhearted toward a poorer brother. Laborers were not to be exploited, even if they were foreigners.

Those easily oppressed, such as the orphan and the widow, who had no one to stand up for them "in the gate," as well as aliens (who had no legal rights), were to be treated with consideration. The gleanings of the vineyards, fields and orchards were to be left for such. A portion of the tithes was also set aside for them. All strangers and foreigners in the country at the time of any of the feasts were to be invited to share with the Israelites.

Judaism was the offspring of the Law. Of all the religions of its time, it alone was practical. Speculative philosophy had no part in it. The religions of the pagan nations appealed to man's lower nature while Israel's God demanded that the best in man be made better. The Jew's religion was meant to distinguish him from the heathen. He was to be separated from his pagan neighbors not only by his creed, but also by his mode of living.

Judaism at the outset was the Mosaic law, embodying the precepts received by Moses direct from God; but through the centuries it gradually evolved into something quite different. With firm resolve Israel had said at the Mount, "All that the Lord hath said will we do, and be obedient" (Ex. 24:7), but once across the Jordan and comfortably settled in the land, it was easy to forget their high resolve. They now dug wells in the earth for water and planted crops on the land for their food—and God seemed a long way off. All that He had done for them receded into the distant past.

As a result, they forgot His commands and the warnings of Moses and adopted the evil practices of their pagan neighbors. Frequently they had to be brought to their senses by the oppression of a God-sent adversary. But their God was a merciful

God; and hearing their pleas He would send a deliverer.

The nation became prosperous under the kings, but while it may have been a "golden age" materially, spiritually the era was a disaster. This spiritual degeneration led first to the division of the kingdom and eventually to the overthrow of both segments of the divided kingdom.

III. THE MOSAIC LAW BEFORE CHRIST

God would be with Israel if they would be with Him. That was His promise from the beginning. He had chosen them and He would be with them and be their God—but they must keep His law. The Law was their life.

The Law called for complete separation from the surrounding nations and the worship of only the true God. Failing in this, the Israelites took into their religion many of the practices and beliefs of their heathen neighbors. Because these heathen beliefs did not harmonize with the Law, they were at first resisted by the Jewish teachers; but through a process of evolution many new beliefs were assimilated. The process was accelerated when the Northern Kingdom was defeated in battle and its inhabitants carried captive to Assyria. In captivity these Israelites mixed so freely with their captors that they became no longer recognizable and vanished from the stage of history.

Some 120 years later the Southern Kingdom met a similar fate at the hand of the Babylonians and its people were transported to Babylon. But they did not succumb as did their brethren of the North. They kept alive their Jewishness and to some extent preserved the worship of God. It was from the ranks of these exiles that groups came who returned to Jerusalem to rebuild the walls and the temple.

C. The Law After the Captivity

Seventy years had elapsed since Nebuchadnezzar carried away to Babylon those whom he took as prisoners when Jerusalem fell to his armies. Cyrus was over the country and the Lord moved him to issue a decree permitting any who desired to return

to Jerusalem and rebuild the city. Many were too comfortable in Babylon to be stirred, but a sizeable company was organized to return.

The captives in Babylon had taken with them the "Book of the Law" and had made some attempt to live up to it. They had established a meeting place during the captivity which came to be known as the **synagogue**, denoting a "place of assembly, a place of coming together." The synagogue kept alive reverence for God and the Law through regular meetings for reading and studying the Hebrew Scriptures. Such meetings were a solemn reminder to the Jews that they were Jews, not Babylonians, living in Babylon, hence they were quick to respond to the call to return to their homeland.

The history of the return in the books of Ezra and Nehemiah shows much evidence of the Law. There is clear evidence that the Law was still being taught and that it was the ruling factor in the lives of the remnant who remained faithful to God.

1. The sacred vessels. When Nebuchadnezzar captured Jerusalem he not only took the people as prisoners, but took with him anything of value from the temple. We read that "Cyrus the king brought forth the vessels of the house of the Lord, which Nebuchadnezzar had brought forth out of Jerusalem, and had put them in the house of his gods" that the returnees might take them with them to replace them in the rebuilt temple (Ezra 1:7-11).

2. Priests and Levites. Among those returning we find listed both priests and Levites, a division made under the Law. Mention is made of a family put out of the priesthood because one of the sons took a wife outside the tribe of Levi, a practice forbidden by the Law (Ezra 2:62).

3. The altar and sacrifices. We learn from Ezra that after the return they gathered at Jerusalem in the seventh month. Their first act was to rebuild the altar so that the sacrifices could be made according to the Law. They "builded the altar of the God of Israel, to offer burnt-offerings thereon, as it is written in the law of Moses the man of God. . . and they offered burnt-offerings thereon unto the Lord, . . . morning and evening. They kept also the feast of tabernacles, as it is written, and offered the daily burnt-offerings by number, according to the custom, as the duty of every day required; and afterward offered the continual burnt-offering, both of the new moons, and of all the set feasts of the Lord that were consecrated" (Ezra 3:2-5).

Their awareness of the Law is evident in their haste to keep its provisions upon their return to Jerusalem. The Law was still in force.

4. The Passover restored. After the completion of the work on the temple, the Israelites dedicated the house, "And they re-established the priests in their groups and the Levites in their divisions for the service of God in Jerusalem, as prescribed in the book of Moses. On the fourteenth day of the first month the exiles who had returned kept the Passover" (Ezra 6:18-19, NEB). According to the narrative, "all who had separated themselves from the peoples of the land" ate the Passover. They were following the precepts of the Law in making themselves ritually clean before eating the Passover.

Some 75 years after the return of the first group of exiles, Ezra the priest returned with another company. Ezra was a devout man and instituted a reform because the people had not kept themselves separate from the inhabitants of the land. "Ye have transgressed, and have taken strange wives, . . . Now therefore . . . separate yourselves from the people of the land, and from the strange wives. . . and let it be done according to the law" (Ezra 10:10-11), said the Priest. The reform was to be "according to the law," the Law given to Moses.

After Nehemiah brought yet another group of refugees to Jerusalem and the wall of the city was rebuilt, we read that "all the people gathered into the street that was before the water gate; and they spake unto Ezra the scribe to bring the book of the law of Moses, which the Lord had commanded to Israel. And Ezra the priest brought the law before the congregation . . . upon the first day of the seventh month. And he read therein . . . from the morning until midday, . . . and the ears of all the people were attentive unto the book of the law. . . . So they read in the book of the law of God distinctly, and gave the sense, and caused them to understand the reading" (Neh. 8:1-8).

Ezra realized that the only way to unite the people was through teaching them the Law—the same Law that Moses had used to transform a horde of freed slaves into a civilized nation. The reading and studying of the Law daily became a part of their new life in Jerusalem.

"And they found written in the law which the Lord had commanded by Moses, that the children of Israel should dwell in booths in the feast of the seventh month [Feast of Tabernacles]" (Neh. 8:14). The people dutifully made themselves booths and dwelt in them for the feast in obedience to the Law given to Moses some ten centuries before. Following the Feast, the people renewed their covenant with the Almighty, agreeing "to walk in God's law, which was given by Moses the servant of God, and to observe and do all the command-

ments of the Lord . . . , and his judgments and his statutes" (Neh. 10:29).

But their memories were short, for the book of Nehemiah ends only a generation later with the people being reprimanded for the same sin—mixing with the people of the land. Whether Nehemiah's reform movement was successful we do not know, as the Biblical account of the nation of Israel ends with his sharp rebuke.

During the more than 400 years between Nehemiah and the birth of Christ a remnant must have faithfully kept the Law because there were some devout Jews waiting for the birth of the Messiah. In general, however, the Jews' religion deteriorated during this period. The priesthood became corrupt until the office of the High Priest was an office more political than religious, and it was under the control of the Roman government, the dominant power in the territory.

The last century before Christ found Judaism fragmented into several divisions, divisions that still existed when Christ came upon the scene. These were the Pharisees, who insisted on scrupulous observances of the minute details of the Law; the Sadducees who represented the aristocracy, the ruling class of the Jews; the Essenes, an ascetic group who shut themselves off from the rest of the world by living in rock-hewn monasteries above the Dead Sea; and the Zealots, a group of radicals intent on overthrowing Rome and its power.

The Pharisees exercised much political power, but they were not a political party. Rather, they were a society of zealous students of the Law who held that the Law was not only in the books of Moses, but also in the writings of the rabbis contained in the Mishnah, the Talmud and the Midrash. The Sadducees limited their beliefs to those found in the written Law and held that these alone were binding, but they denied belief in the resurrection because they found no basis for it in the Mosaic law. All of these groups were ignorant of the real intent and purpose of Moses' law.

IV. THE MOSAIC LAW AFTER CHRIST

When Jesus began His ministry many of His listeners were from the various sects of the Jewish people. The majority were Pharisees—but there were many degrees of Pharisees. They ranged from the God-fearing who truly loved the Law to the hypocrites who bickered over the fine points of the Law and against whom Jesus directed His stern rebuke. These degrees are evident in the Gospels, where we read of Jairus, "one of the rulers of the synagogue" (Mark 5:22) who came to Jesus

to request that his daughter be healed; of Nicodemus, "a man of the Pharisees, . . . a ruler of the Jews" who came to Jesus by night (John 3:1); of Caiaphas the high priest who was willing to witness falsely against Jesus and to condemn Him to death (Matt. 26:57-65); and the self-righteous Pharisee who went into the temple to pray (Luke 18:10).

In general, the Pharisees had reduced Moses' law to a legalism of petty rules and regulations, the majority of which were entirely foreign to the Law as given by Moses. To keep the Law as they saw it was a burden.

It was from this burden that Jesus offered rest. All things have an end. The Law had been in effect some fifteen centuries, and it was destined to cease. It had been given for a specific purpose, and it had fulfilled that purpose.

A. Jesus' Attitude Toward the Law

The Pharisees (and many of their contemporaries) attempted to prove that Jesus was just another Rabbi, a Pharisee Himself, a ruler or teacher of the synagogue. But Jesus' words and actions disprove their claim. Jesus was not teaching the law of Moses; He was teaching a better law. He was both the end of the old system and the personification of the new. Of Himself He said: "Think not that I am come to destroy the law, or the prophets: I am not come to destroy, but to fulfill. . . . Till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law, till all be fulfilled" (Matt. 5:17-18).

Jesus fulfilled or finished the Law; He did nothing to perpetuate it. He testified to its fulfillment after His resurrection: "These are the words which I spake unto you, while I was yet with you, that all things must be fulfilled, which were written in the law of Moses, and in the prophets, and in the psalms, concerning me" (Luke 24:44).

Jesus spoke with undisputed authority in regard to the Law. He was superseding the Law and expanding it to cover not only the overt act, but the evil thought that precedes the action. He was changing the Law from a head religion to a heart religion, from outward show to inner cleansing.

Jesus' attitude toward the Law is most evident in the Sermon on the Mount. "Ye have heard that it was said by them of old time, Thou shalt not kill; and whosoever shall kill shall be in danger of the judgment: But I say unto you, That whosoever is angry with his brother . . . shall be in danger of the judgment" (Matt. 5:21-22). Under the old Law, a man must kill another to be guilty; under Jesus' law, it is a sin to be angry.

Again He said, "Ye have heard that it was said by them of old time, Thou shalt not commit adultery: But I say unto you, That whosoever looketh on a woman to lust after her hath committed adultery with her already in his heart" (Matt. 5: 27-28). Jesus was teaching strict morality, demanding fidelity of wedded partners.

Following the same pattern, Jesus made His teaching plain on a wide variety of subjects, showing Himself superior to the old Law. He sought to stem the evil at its source—the thought. It is what comes from within, not without, that defiles men. In listing the thirteen evils in Mark 7:21-23 he began with "evil thoughts." An evil thought is the beginning of every evil. **Moses' law was not concerned with the thoughts and intents of the heart or mind, only with the outward sin; but Jesus' teaching took both into account.**

The Pharisees professed to obey Moses' law and the scribes supposedly taught it in the temple. But the Law had degenerated until more weight was being given to tradition than to the original Law and Jesus condemned the practice, saying, "Howbeit in vain do they worship me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men. For laying aside the commandment of God, ye hold the tradition of men.... Ye reject the commandment of God, that ye may keep your own tradition" (Mark 7:7-9).

Jesus' scathing denunciation of the hypocritical Pharisees pointed out the inconsistencies in their religion: "Woe to you, Pharisees, and you other religious leaders. Hypocrites! For you won't let others enter the Kingdom of Heaven, and won't go in yourselves. And you pretend to be holy, with all your long, public prayers in the streets, while you are evicting widows from their homes.... Blind guides! Woe upon you!... For you tithe down to the last mint leaf in your garden, but ignore the important things—justice and mercy and faith.... You are so careful to polish the outside of the cup, but the inside is foul with extortion and greed.... First cleanse the inside of the cup, and then the whole cup will be clean.... You try to look like saintly men, but underneath those pious robes of yours are hearts besmirched with every sort of hypocrisy and sin" (Matthew 23, TLB).

Such contradictions had come about through the oral tradition that had been added to the Law by various rabbis over the centuries. In the original, there was one Law for both strangers and citizens and all were treated alike under its provisions. **Jesus' teachings contained but one standard for all; He refused to recognize a law that showed preference for class. His teachings were based on**

the provisions of the royal law, the law of God which had existed before the Mosaic law and to which it had been added.

B. Jesus, the End of the Law

The Mosaic law was given for a specific purpose and for a limited time. It was a civil law, and a national law for the nation of Israel. As long as that nation existed, it was in force. When God concluded His working with Israel as a nation, their law, having served its purpose, passed away.

From the time of Adam until the time of Moses, God's people were under the royal law, the eternal law of faith and obedience. When God called Israel and made them a nation, He added the law of Moses (Gal. 3:19). When that Law was taken away, God's people were again under the law of faith.

Paul explains the limitations of the Law: "Wherefore then serveth the law? It was added because of transgressions, till the seed should come to whom the promise was made.... Now to Abraham and his seed were the promises made. He saith not, And to seeds, as of many; but as of one, And to thy seed, which is Christ" (Gal. 3:19, 16).

Jesus Christ was the promised seed; He was "the end of the law... to everyone that believeth" (Rom. 10:4). "For there is verily a disannulling of the commandment going before.... For the law made nothing perfect, but the bringing in of a better hope did; by the which we draw nigh unto God" (Heb. 7:18-19). The Law "was our schoolmaster to bring us unto Christ, that we might be justified by faith. But after that faith is come, we are no longer under a schoolmaster" (Gal. 3:24).

To be a messenger you must know the message.

TEST YOURSELF

1. What was the chief difference between the law of Moses and the law of faith?
2. Did the captive Israelites live according to the law of Moses while in exile?
3. What was Jesus' relationship to the Mosaic Law?
4. Explain how Jesus was the "end of the law."
5. Why did Jesus denounce the Pharisees of His day?
6. What was the purpose of the Law of Moses?

Reprints of these studies are available upon request.

*Dare to be a Daniel, dare to stand alone,
Dare to have a purpose firm, dare to make it known.*
—P. P. Bliss

On Mores and Morals

RECENT years have shown a great revolution in morals and moral values. By this I refer to general attitudes toward fornication, adultery, and sexuality. What has happened is that a social revolution which started on campus has spread to all areas of life and society until morality, decency, devotion to duty, God, family and country are values held up to mockery. Almost anything can be shown on the movie screen, almost anything can be printed, almost anything can be done without condemnation. Ultra-suggestive dancing on TV is said to be "interpretive" art. Vulgar, indecent remarks are offered as an "earthy" commentary on our changing times.

Someone has fittingly described our country as "fast sinking into a moral cesspool!"

The words of Jesus come to mind: "As it was in the days of Noah. . . Likewise also as it was in the days of Lot. . . Even thus shall it be in the day when the Son of man is revealed" (Luke 17:26-30).

As It Used to Be

Fifty years ago a person who stood up for principle was considered worthy of recognition. He was looked up to as a hero, an individual who would be a success in life. To be lazy, slovenly, dishonest, an intemperate drinker, a libertine, was considered a disgrace by all people of reputation. A student was expected to abide by the rules of the institution he attended. Both parents and teachers expected children to apply themselves to their studies and to strive for the highest marks of which they were capable. The majority of men and women at least tried to live up to a moral code accepted by society in general. Men dressed like men and women dressed like women. Textbooks for use in primary grades often featured moral lessons which were designed to guide impressionable minds to a higher—not a lower—level.

All this has gradually changed during the last January, 1976

few years. While at one time a person could be arrested and punished for immoral conduct or obscenity, today one can be arrested for *prohibiting* or *interfering* with such conduct. School authorities are prohibited from prescribing any sort of dress code for students. Girls can dress like boys or wear very little if they choose to. Boys can wear their hair as long as they like, put strings of beads around their necks, and look as much like girls as possible. The unisex craze is the "in" thing.

Such action is a direct violation of Paul's command that a woman should dress in modest apparel "as becometh women professing godliness" (I Tim. 2:10). But few today give any open acknowledgment to Paul's words.

The almost universal practice of communal living in college dormitories, where men and women room together, is especially to be condemned by any who profess loyalty to Christian principles; and authorities, who must protect the "rights" of "free" people are helpless to stop the practice. The school or college which might try to expel a student for unseemly conduct can find itself in a lawsuit.

Pleasure Is Primary

A teacher in a high school near Rochester wrote an article in the *Rochester Democrat and Chronicle* recently in which he made the following observation about our modern educational systems:

"A member of the 'not-so-in' group might ask just what is this 'thing' the young are doing. Ask one and you will receive a pretty standard reply—'It's like being where it's all at.' Most of America's educators know where 'it's all at.' But it's sad—the young aren't there. Where are they? I'll tell you where they are. They are out in their supercilious sacred world of cushioned 'cop outs' where the pursuit of pleasure is primary and 'effort' is a dirty word" (by Mr. DeLeo, Newark Central High School).

Could anything more nearly fulfill the prediction of the apostle Paul in II Timothy 3: "People will be selfish, avaricious, boastful, haughty, abusive, disobedient to parents, ungrateful, irreverent, lacking in love for kinsmen, irreconcilable, slanderers, having no self-control, savage, lacking in love for the good, treacherous, reckless, conceited, loving pleasure more than God" (II Tim. 3:2-4, Williams).

While many educators and parents would take a firm stand if they could, I feel that far too many are to blame for the permissiveness indulged in today. Human nature tends toward animal nature. Improvement in any field comes only through effort, diligent effort. Due to the removal of all restraints, and under the guise of constitutional freedom of speech, the young are constantly bombarded with every known type of human misconduct, murder, rape, violence, pornography, and deviant sexual behavior. Is it any wonder that they are confused and bewildered?

Fighting for Morality

In this time of extreme laxity, it is heartening to learn of the stand taken by the president of Brigham Young University, Dallin H. Oaks. The university has long upheld a strict moral code for its students and violations have been cause for expulsion. A student is expected to adhere to sexually distinguishing modes of dress and grooming; to shun drugs, tobacco, alcohol, coffee and tea; to disavow cheating and other dishonesty, and to pledge adherence to the law of chastity.

New federal regulations prohibit a university from imposing such restrictions. But the president, Mr. Oaks, and the university, are determined to fight the regulations which would forbid the enforcement of Christian ethics on campus. As reported by the Associated Press, the university made the following significant statement:

"If our government not only abandons the advocacy of moral standards but positively prohibits the practice of such values at teaching institutions, as these regulations appear to do, the destruction of America as a great nation will be both imminent and inevitable."

We can only add that without divine intervention, the destruction of society as we have known it is inevitable.

Ecologists are very concerned with the pollution of the water and the air, as well they may be. Industry and the government are spending vast sums of money to improve the quality of the air we breathe and the water we drink. How absurd for

the government to spend this money to improve our physical environment and at the same time spend money to prevent colleges from enforcing rules which would help to maintain a healthy, moral environment!

Standing by Conviction

With so many caught in the downtrend, it is also refreshing to hear of another minority who are willing to stand up for a principle they believe in and even sacrifice for it.

The Meredith Corporation of Des Moines, Iowa, after losing the contract for printing *Better Homes and Gardens* magazine, has recently signed a five-year contract to print *Penthouse* and *Viva* magazines, and has begun work on these magazines. Neither magazine belongs in a Christian home. In fact, neither belongs in *any* home.

Many of the workers in the Meredith plant who are required to work on such "garbage" have protested, feeling it wrong for the company to print such magazines. Some are working under protest; five have been fired for refusing to have any part in producing such immoral material. One man, Bill E. Mackin, a Baptist, has been an engraver with Meredith for twenty-four years. He has a family to support, and at his age (50 years) it is difficult to start another line of work. He and his co-workers show outstanding courage to stand by their convictions, even to facing financial loss.

If more people had the courage to take such a stand for principle, the world would not be sinking to the depths of immorality that it is.

Remember Daniel

The prophet Daniel, a young Hebrew captive who suddenly found himself in Babylon, remains a tower of strength and a grand example of character. Surrounded by the glamors of a pagan court, he refused to succumb to its evil influence. He refused to bow down to a heathen idol, or to defile himself with the "king's meat," but continued to worship God and stand by his convictions, even in the face of death. We need more Daniels today.

A strong character dominated by Christian principles is an asset to withstanding the stresses of modern living in this world; but it is an absolute necessity if one is to meet God's standard for citizenship in His future Kingdom. And citizenship in that New World is our only hope of release from the present evil one. ●●

Tame that Tongue

(Continued from page 7)

low-growing thornbushes and scrub were as dry as tinder. If a fire was set, the flames could not be stopped.

"An ungodly man diggeth up evil," says the writer of the Proverbs, "and in his lips there is as a burning fire" (Prov. 16:27).

The book of Ecclesiasticus, though part of the Apocryphal writings, contains some sharp explanation of the powers of the human tongue:

"Honour and shame is in talk; and the tongue of man is his fall. Be not called a whisperer, and lie not in wait with thy tongue; for a foul shame is upon the thief, and an evil condemnation upon the double tongue. . . . Blessed is the man who has not slipped with his mouth. . . . Who is he that hath not offended with his tongue? . . . Who shall set a watch before my mouth, and a seal of wisdom upon my lips, that I fall not suddenly by them, and that my tongue destroy me not?

"The stroke of the whip maketh marks in the flesh: but the stroke of the tongue breaketh the bones. Many have fallen by the edge of the sword; but not so many as have fallen by the tongue. Well is he that is defended from it, and has not passed through the venom thereof. . . . For the yoke thereof is a yoke of iron, . . . the death thereof is an evil death" (Ecclesiasticus 5:13-14; 14:1; 19:16; 22:27, Septuagint).

"Curses on the gossip and the tale-bearer! For they have been the ruin of many peaceable men. . . . The lash of the whip raises weals, but the lash of a tongue breaks bones. Many have been killed by the sword, but not so many as by the tongue. Happy the man who is sheltered from its onslaught, who has not been exposed to its fury, who has not borne its yoke, or been chained with its fetters! For its yoke is of iron, its fetters of bronze. The death it brings is an evil death; better the grave than the tongue! . . .

"As you enclose your garden with a thorn hedge, and lock up your silver and gold, so weigh your words and measure them, and make a door and a bolt for your mouth. Beware of being tripped by your tongue, and falling into the power of a lurking enemy" (Eccls. 28:13-26, NEB).

No man can say that he has not been warned of the dangers of the tongue, and no man can say that he has entirely avoided them.

Taming Essential

"For while every kind of beast and bird, of creeping animals and creatures marine, is tameable and

has been tamed by mankind, no man can tame the tongue—plague of disorder that it is, full of deadly venom!" (Jas. 3:7-8, Moffatt).

Man's ingenuity, says James, has tamed every wild creature, except the tongue. To tame means to control, to render useful and beneficial; and that, says James, is what no man by his own unaided efforts has ever been able to do with the tongue.

"No man can tame the tongue." No, a man might be forced to keep still, might have his mouth covered so that he could not speak, but that would not be *taming* the tongue. Taming involves voluntary control.

We might note here that James is not pleading for silence. He does not say for a moment that silence is better than speech. What he is pleading for is *control* of the tongue. Abstinence from anything is never a substitute for control in its use. James does not desire a cowardly silence, but a *controlled use* of speech.

Control—How?

And what is the medium of this control? The Word of God. Nothing in this wide world can tame the tongue except God's mighty truth. No other power can accomplish it. The Word of God teaches us to control the thoughts of our mind. And when we have our minds controlled, then we can control our words.

Taming the tongue means real work. If you are in the habit of letting the tongue run loose at both ends, so to speak, you have more to do; but, then, is not the reward great enough to impel us to do the work?

If we would only realize the importance of this work, if we would realize the depth of our iniquity and the purity God requires, we could do more in a week than some people will do in a lifetime. We *can* accomplish the work *if we will*.

Human Inconsistency

James continues: The tongue is "an unruly evil, full of deadly poison," filled with deadly venom. If we were confronted with something that was full of deadly poison, we would try to escape from it. But how especially deadly is our unruly tongue, because it will take our prospects of eternal life; and yet, how unconcerned we often are.

"With the tongue we bless the Lord and Father, and with the tongue we curse men made in God's own likeness; blessing and cursing stream from the same lips" (Jas. 3:9-10, Moffatt). Yes, how inconsistent we are! We go to church on Sunday, praise God in word and song, and then have

quarrels and strife and bitterness throughout the week. "Blessing and cursing stream from the same lips! My brothers, this ought not to be. Does a fountain pour out fresh water and brackish from the same hole? Can a fig tree, my brothers, bear olives? Or a vine, figs? No more can salt water yield fresh" (Jas. 3:10-12, Moffatt).

We all know this to be true. There is a cleavage in human nature. By nature we are double-minded. In each of us there is something of the hero and something of the villain, something of the saint and much of the sinner. And it is James' conviction that nowhere is this contradiction more evident than in the tongue.

This human weakness showed up vividly in the life of the apostle Peter. The same tongue that could say, "Though I should die with thee, yet will I not deny thee" (Matt. 26:35) could only a few hours later deny Jesus with the unrestrained, base language of an unbeliever. And who of us has not been guilty of this perversion in greater or lesser degree? How many times have we uttered the most pious sentiments one day, only to dishearten another with aimless talk the next! How many times have we renewed our determination to live holily and blamelessly before God and then gone out to stir up envy or hatred or bitterness or some other evil of the flesh!

These things, says James, should not be. And they *must not be* if we would become that "perfect man, able also to bridle the whole body." It is one of life's hardest duties to see that the tongue does not contradict itself, but that it always speaks only such words as we would wish God to hear.

Two Kinds of Wisdom

"Who among you is wise and learned? Let him show by his good conduct, with the humble modesty of wisdom what his deeds are" (v. 13, Moffatt). Yes, who among us is wise and learned? Let him show it to the Lord by his fruits, by his life.

We must learn to control ourselves, learn to speak with modesty.

"But if you are cherishing bitter jealousy and rivalry in your hearts, do not pride yourselves on that—and be false to the truth" (v. 14). Jealousy is as cruel as the grave; jealousy is a terrible evil. And so is rivalry, that desire to excel, that fear that someone will not think us as important as we are. Rivalry and jealousy in our hearts—when we should by our "good conduct" be showing "the humble modesty of wisdom"—think of it! Those evils naturally dwell in us; but we must recognize them and learn to watch them. "If you are cherishing bitter jealousy and rivalry in your hearts, do not

pride yourselves on that"—no, let us never be proud of any evil.

"That is not the wisdom that comes down from above, it is an earthly wisdom, unspiritual, devilish; for wherever jealousy and rivalry exist, there disorder reigns and every evil." Jealousy and rivalry—those are the feelings that often impel the tongue to move with ever increasing force and venom.

The wisdom that has jealousy and rivalry beneath it is the wrong kind of wisdom. It produces neither the kind of people nor the kind of situation which God delights in. Instead of uniting brethren in Christ, it drives them apart. Instead of producing peace, it generates strife. It is devilish, rather than divine.

James then tells of another kind of wisdom:

"The wisdom from above is first of all pure, then peaceable, forbearing, conciliatory, full of mercy and wholesome fruit, unambiguous, straightforward; and the peacemakers who sow in peace reap righteousness" (Jas. 3:17-18, Moffatt). God's wisdom is full of mercy and wholesome fruits, these superior attributes which, if absorbed into our lives, will make of us peacemakers, making peace with God. In such wisdom there is no rivalry, no jealousy. It is a wisdom so cleansed of all ulterior motives, so cleansed of self that it has become pure enough to bear the very scrutiny of God. It is *true* wisdom.

This wisdom from above produces right and Christian relationships between man and man, and between man and God. It is peacemaking, bringing its possessors ever closer to God.

This true wisdom is "unambiguous, straightforward." No division, no double-mindedness, no wavering or hesitating or vacillating. It means that we are certain of our convictions, that we are not merely acting a part but that we are genuine, honest, "without partiality, and without hypocrisy."

More on Speech Control

Jesus warns of the seriousness of our words: "I tell you, on the day of judgment men will have to account for every careless [light or injurious] word they utter; for by your words you will be acquitted, and by your words you will be condemned" (Matt. 12:36-37, Moffatt).

Do we realize the significance of this fact? Our words have sufficient importance to decide our fate, for good or ill, in the Last Judgment. So let us be exceedingly careful in their use; let us tame our unruly tongue, for by our words we will be acquitted, and by our words we will be condemned. ●●

Kathy Kandor's Korner

The Impact of Influence

PETER, Paul or James? Who should be our next Bible friend? I was trying to line up something for our evening Bible studies. Everyone in the family seemed to enjoy getting acquainted with these special "friends," even little Joan. Study-time was a highlight every day.

Suddenly the shrill ring of the telephone pierced my quiet contemplating.

"Kathy!" it was the enthusiastic voice of Jane Benson.

"I just *have* to tell you what happened at our house last evening." She chuckled as she continued.

"You know what a serious child Irene is. Well, Rose was washing the dishes last night, and pouting and complaining like she always does, when Irene came into the kitchen. And what do you suppose Irene told her big sister. 'You aren't happy like Mrs. Kandor. She always *sings* when *she* washes dishes.' Rose rather crossly asked Irene how she knew so much, and Irene replied very matter-of-factly, 'Cause she sings. I've heard her. And when I grow up, I'm going to love to wash dishes *just like Mrs. Kandor.*'"

"Well, well," I managed to say as I smiled to myself about my "love" for dishwashing. If little Irene only knew—!

Jane had more to tell. "Then Irene climbed up on the kitchen stool, took the dish towel and proceeded to demonstrate just how you do it. And if she didn't start singing one of her Sunday School songs! I wish you could have heard her."

I drew a sharp breath. *When* could Irene have seen me washing dishes? And how could such an ordinary home task impress her young mind so deeply? How unaware of it I had been.

How great the impact of influence! My mind flew from point to point, as I tried to think when and

where and how Irene might have seen me washing dishes.

"Kathy, are you there?" asked Jane.

"Yes, yes," I answered quickly, trying to pick up the thread of her conversation. "Thank you so much for telling me. It's encouraging. The children watch us so closely, and this sure is a waker-upper for me. They're so quick to copy. I just wonder sometimes if what they see is really worth copying."

"I know, Kathy, I'm afraid it is quite a mixture much of the time, like the tree of good and evil. Trouble is, they don't know how to sort out the good and reject the evil."

"And it is strangely true—at least in our family—that the evil is much easier to copy than the good!" I added.

"Right you are, Kathy. And when children are Irene's age, everything the oldsters do—especially the parents—is just perfect in their estimation. They have fullest confidence that Mom and Dad are always right."

"We certainly don't want to betray that confidence. But they are seeing and hearing and learning *all the time*, even when we aren't consciously aware of their presence. It is something to watch very, very closely." And thanking her once again for phoning, I said goodbye.

What a bright spot in my day! What an unexpected lift! To think that my old stumbling block of complaint had been moved enough so that my happiness could help someone else—even little Irene!

But the thought of the power of influence had overwhelmed me. Even the smallest things I do are an influence on others—the good things and, unfortunately, the bad also. I shuddered as I thought about what Irene *might* have seen had she been watching me *some times*—those times when everything seems to go wrong and my patience wears thin. What an encouragement in the good she chanced to see, but what a warning to make sure my influence is *always* the kind I would want her to imitate.

How very, very true, I thought, are the words of the apostle Paul. "No man lives to himself alone," however insignificant his life may seem. It is true of me, it is true of you. Our very presence among others is a constant influence upon them. We may think, What I say isn't important. But it is! For someone else will either be helped or hindered by it.

As I thought about Jane's call, I found myself searching deeper into my own heart. What about my faith? Is it radiant? Does it shine so brightly through my life that others will, almost uncon-

sciously, find themselves reflecting it? Is my hope strong, so strong that it can overpower another's discouragement? Do I think about the glorious hope held out by God so much that it overflows and enthuses others as well as myself to work for something better than this life?

My joy in living by God's Word—is it contagious? Do those who see me day after day feel an inner urge to want to try that type of life themselves?

How calmly can I take the little irritations of daily life? Have I the strength of mind, the fixity of purpose, the unwavering faith that I am heartened to see in others?

And then another thought struck me—I am accountable before God *for my influence*.

"Dear God," I prayed, "keep me aware that whatever I say or do, someone is watching me. I want my life to be such a clear reflection of You and Your principles that when they see me they will recognize Your image and be encouraged to live nearer to You."

Yours for a better influence,

Kathy

READ *for Your LIFE!*

HISTORY OF THE MEGIDDO MISSION
THE COMING OF JESUS AND ELIJAH
WHAT MUST WE DO TO BE SAVED?

GOD'S SPIRITUAL CREATION

THE KINGDOM OF GOD

THE GREAT APOSTASY

AFTER DEATH, WHAT?

THE DEVIL AND HELL

TRINITY OR UNITY?

THE HOLY SPIRIT

THE ATONEMENT

THE SABBATH

*ALL for \$2.00, Postpaid.
Single books, 25¢ each.*

Do You Know?

Can you fill in the blanks? (Each blank stands for a syllable)

Bible names are fascinating.

I wonder what will be your rating
At guessing what or who or why
The special fact we tell them by?

_____ was a lad who grew
Long, long ago as number two
Among the sons of _____,
A parent of whom I hope you've read
In Bible stories.

Then _____ is another name
Well known, well loved, of lasting fame.
One faithful friend of his we know,
Sometimes he's called Abednego,
And there were others.

Let's think of _____ a while.
His name would always bring a smile
To dear old Brother Paul, you know,
Because he helped and loved him so,
He was most faithful.

Now let's go back and mention one
Whose name was _____, a young son.
He stuck to what he had been taught,
No matter what life's changes brought.
And they were many.

We think of gracious _____, too.
Her name is known to me, to you
As a loved mother in the Book.
She in great testing ne'er forsook
God for a moment.

_____ lived in Jesus' day.
He learned to run the living way.
Fourfold he paid when he'd done wrong
While publicly serving the Roman throng.
He changed his life.

Do you e'er think of loving _____
Who once did walk this earth upon?
He wrote of _____, who awoke
From rock-sealed tomb when Jesus spoke
The words: "Come forth."

MEGIDDO MESSAGE

Just one more name we'll talk about,
 Old _____ had a clout
 Under his arm to help a bit
 When they lifted him from the pit
 To save his life.

He faithfully his voice did raise
 Urging his kinsmen to heed God's ways,
 To save their city, people, too;
 But Jerusalem was lost to view,
 In ruins buried.

Answers:

Aaron; Jochobed; Daniel; Timothy; Joseph; Sarah; Zach-
 eus; John; Lazarus; Jeremiah.

"Lord, I Talk Too Much"

(Continued from page 8)

yourself never to act or react impulsively to anything. Find some method of slowing down your response. Ask yourself candidly: Is this what I really mean to say? What will it sound like to others? Then think still further: Is what I want to say really needful? Is it edifying? Will it please God? If not, hold in!

Step Four: Thank God.

If you are able to thank God for every word or thought you are able to express, for the thought behind the word and for the tongue to express it, you will never find it necessary to acknowledge, "Lord, I talk too much."

If you have committed your life and all your being to God, to be used by Him as He directs, your tongue is not your own. You are not able to say, "Our lips are our own: who is lord over us?" (Ps. 12:4). Instead you will say, "Lord, I offer You my tongue. Use it for Your purposes, as You see best," and each time you speak you will remind yourself of this agreement.

Our tongues have been given us to speak words of truth and justice, love and purpose, not for idle chatter and meaningless talk, or worse. Let's practice more to use them as God would have us. For "Death and life are in the power of the tongue"—and we want LIFE! ●●

January, 1976

Our Readers Write...

From the Land of Poland

My sincere thanks to you for the literature sent. I believe with the help of my friend, who understands English, I will be able to get an accurate understanding of the contents. It has been some time since I ordered it, I was almost afraid it had met the same fate as the previous packet of literature, which was confiscated by the civil law.

In the packet I found one Polish brochure, *Elijah the Prophet Coming Before Christ*, which I read easily. The contents of the book appealed to me very much. It calls attention to a very important Biblical promise omitted, it seems, by all the Christian churches. The matter is momentous, and I am in agreement with it.

The subjects of your publications are very interesting and have been of interest to me for a long time.

I sincerely confess that at the beginning, after learning about your position on the sacrificial atonement of Christ, I did not agree at once. But after much time and deliberation, I have reached the conclusion that a new understanding of the subject is not after all so greatly impossible. I am very grateful to you, for it is wholly a new approach to the question.

I am somewhat permeated with traditional explanations dominant in Christianity, and that is why new thoughts, even though sensible, cause the release of internal resistance which gives way only after much deliberation and study. Please give me accurate Biblical enlightenment concerning this problem.

R. K.

Deceased

I want to let you know that my grandmother (Mrs. Annie Hahs) passed away in her sleep on November 13. We are grateful that she did not have to suffer.

Marble Hill, Missouri

Jane Hahs

NOTE: Sister Hahs was a committed correspondent of the Megiddo Church and a subscriber to the Megiddo Message for more than fifty years. And over the years she received many visitors and missionaries from the Church.

Sister Hahs was blest with a long and active life—she died just ten days short of her ninety-ninth birthday.

—EDITOR.

Inspired

I had to write you a note telling you how inspiring your cover for October, 1975, is! In each magazine I learn something new.

How pitiful that only so few today have any knowledge that is good for the human heart. Keep up the good work!

Pasadena, California

W. F.

Questions

"I followed your series of articles on Israel, and what you contend for, you contend for well. But you err concerning the 144,000 and the kingdom. Isaiah 66:19, last clause, says, '... and they shall declare my glory among the Gentiles.' 'They' are the 'escaped ones,' mentioned earlier in the verse, and also in Isaiah 4:2. You say 'they' are the 144,000 and Gentiles. This does not make sense, to say that the escaped ones of the Gentiles will be sent to the Gentiles themselves. They have to be Israelites, the firstfruits, the 144,000, who go forth to the Gentiles to gather in the great multitude of their brethren in Christ (see Isaiah 66:20)."

Before we can understand the Prophet's thought, we need to be sure of the time he is describing. Isaiah 66:15 tells us the time: "For, behold, the Lord will come with fire, and with his chariots like a whirlwind, to render his anger with fury, and his rebuke with flames of fire." "Fire," as used in the Bible, often is a "symbol of destruction, whether of men or of things; . . . figuratively used of the judgments of God." Isaiah is talking about the time when Christ will come, bringing judgment upon all men and punishment upon those who refuse to submit to Him.

"For by fire and by his sword will the Lord plead with all flesh: and the slain of the Lord shall be many" (v. 16). Verse 18 describes the scope of this great work, and identifies the people who will be involved: ". . . It shall come, that I will gather all nations and tongues; and they shall come, and see my glory." Note that it is "all nations and tongues," no special regard is given to either natural Israelites or natural Gentiles.

It would appear from Isaiah's prophecy, however, that the entire work will not be accomplished at once. For in verses 18-19, the Prophet adds detail to the prophecy already given, telling *how* "all nations and tongues" shall "see [God's] glory." Those who are the first informed will be sent as special messengers to those who have not heard. He says, "And I will send those that escape of them unto the nations, to Tarshish, Pul, and Lud, that draw the bow, to Tubal and Javan, to the isles afar off, that have not heard my fame,

neither have seen my glory; and they shall declare my glory among the Gentiles." God will send the "escaped ones," those who have escaped out of "all nations and tongues," to those who "have not heard my fame, neither have seen my glory," and the next phrase identifies these same people as "Gentiles." The Septuagint Bible uses the word "nations" instead of "Gentiles." "Gentiles" is a term often used generally for those who are "strangers to the true religion" (Gesenius' Hebrew English Lexicon).

There is nothing impossible about the Lord's sending "those that escape" out of "all nations and tongues" to other nations and tongues who have not yet heard of God's fame or seen His glory; God does not respect the people or despise them because of their nationality; His only purpose is that *all* should see His power and learn of Him. What difference would it make, whether "those that escape" the first phase of His judgments happened to be natural Jews or natural Gentiles? Could not "escaped ones" from either group be sent to others of either group?

Isaiah 66:20 tells of the success of this mission and identifies those who respond to the messengers as their "brethren"—which indeed they will be; for the Lord shall ultimately have "one nation" and "one people" under one king and one government (see Zech. 14:9; Ezek. 37:22). Isaiah says, "And they shall bring all your brethren for an offering unto the Lord out of all nations . . . to my holy mountain Jerusalem." The people termed "your brethren" could not be all natural Israelites, for they are "out of all nations"; and they are people who have not formerly heard God's fame or seen His glory—natural Israelites have heard and seen.

As for Isaiah 4:2, there seems to be little connection between this text and Isaiah 66:19. In Isaiah 4, the Prophet is describing the time when God's purging judgments are ended and only the pure and righteous remain. The "escaped" are those who are "holy." They are the same group of chosen people, Israelites indeed; must we say they are all natural-born Israelites simply because they are described as the "escaped of Israel"?

According to Revelation, the 144,000 chosen and faithful ones who stand with the Lamb on Mount Sion (Rev. 14:1) are the "redeemed" (v. 4), and these redeemed ones are "out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation" (Rev. 5:9-10). It is they who will go forth to gather those who will become the populace of the Kingdom from all nations, from the Gentiles. The Bible does not teach that the kingdom is reserved for natural-born Israelites exclusively.

"When Jesus died on the cross, it is written in Matthew (in the "Living Bible") that He cried out, 'My God, My God, why have you forsaken me?' In Mark, it is translated, 'My God, my God, why have you deserted me?' In Luke it is, 'Father, I commit my spirit to you.' And in John it is, 'It is finished.' Please tell me what Jesus really meant.

"I read in one of your booklets that Jesus was praising God for releasing Him from His pain so soon, since dying by crucifixion can last for several days. But I do not remember all you said, and I am confused."

We do not feel that Jesus could have accused God of forsaking or deserting Him. God's promise to every faithful child is, "I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee," as it is stated by the author of Hebrews (13:5). How then could we believe that God forsook His well-beloved Son in such a dire moment as the moment of His death?

No, we can be confident that no such thought ever entered Jesus' mind, for it would be contrary to the principle of all Scripture.

But how can we reconcile Jesus' words with this thought? Jesus' words are quoted from the original Hebrew, recorded in Psalm 22:1. To understand it we must examine the possible meanings of the words used for a possible alternate translation. Of the Hebrew word *azab* translated "forsaken," the Hebrew Lexicon gives as a first definition, "To loosen bands and to let a beast go free from its bonds" as in Ex. 23:5. "It is applied to a servant set free." Regarding the word translated "why" (Hebrew, *mah*) we read: "How, how much; in exclamations of admiration, as Ps. 8:1: 'How excellent is thy name!' Ps. 119:97: 'O how I love thy law!' Job 26:2: 'O how greatly hast thou helped the feeble.'"

Jesus' use of these words (Matt. 27:46) might then be translated, "My God! My God! how greatly hast thou helped me! how wonderful has been my release!" The New Testament, as translated from the "Ancient Eastern Manuscripts" by George M. Lamsa, renders this passage as: "And about the ninth hour, Jesus cried out with a loud voice and said, Eli, Eli, lemana shabakthani! which means My God, my God, for this I was spared!"

In place of reviling His Father, Jesus breathed His last with a prayer of thankfulness on His lips to the righteous God who had relieved Him of His suffering and who would soon raise Him from death's slumber to the glory of an endless life. ●●

You can resist anyone's temptation—until it becomes your own.

January, 1976

The Sins of the Tongue

(Continued from page 5)

epistle," from a Roman dungeon. He lived what he preached in the exhortation, "Do all things without grumbling or questioning" (Phil. 2:14, RSV).

Another sin of the tongue is foul talking. The Bible says, "Let no evil talk come out of your mouths" (Eph. 4:29, RSV). In other words, let there be no filthiness in your talk. The Christian should avoid like a plague the dirty stories and off-color jokes that are so frequently heard.

The Psalmist said, "Set a watch, O Lord, before my mouth" (Ps. 141:3). Thousands of persons are committing immorality by the way they talk. There are many ways that this can be done, and all the way through the Bible it is condemned as a heinous and grievous sin before God. Yet today millions of persons deliberately disregard the law of God.

The problems of the world could be solved overnight if men could get victory over their tongues. Suppose there was no anger, no profanity, no lying, no grumbling or complaining; suppose there were no dirty stories told, no unjust criticism—what a different world this would be! The Bible says, "For where envying and strife is, there is confusion and every evil work. But the wisdom that is from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, and easy to be intreated, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality, and without hypocrisy. And the fruit of righteousness is sown in peace of them that make peace" (Jas. 3:16-18).

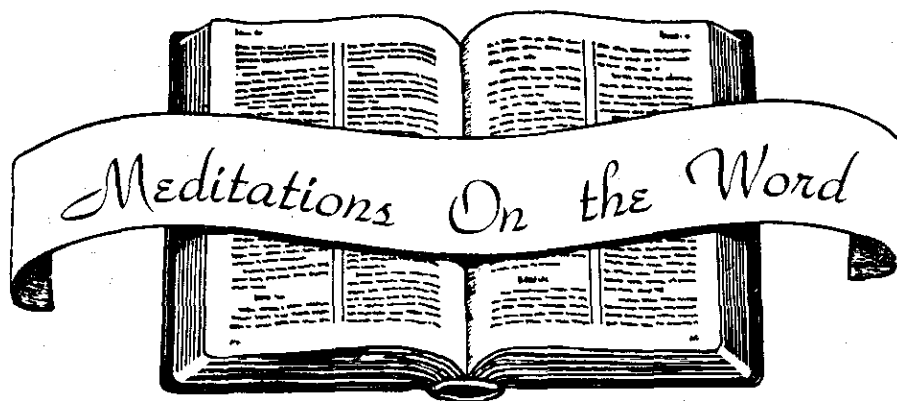
THREE QUESTIONS

We should ask ourselves three questions before we speak: is it true? is it kind? does it glorify Christ?

If we would always think before we speak, there would be much less evil speaking and there would soon be a spiritual awakening and a revival that would sweep the church. ●●

For this thought-provoking article we are indebted to Billy Graham, "The Sins of the Tongue." Copyright 1968 by the Billy Graham Evangelistic Association. Used by permission.

God's influence is like a compass—it doesn't force you to stay on course, but it points the way and shows you when you are off course.



"Be silent, O all flesh, before the Lord: for he is raised up out of his holy habitation" (Zechariah 2:13).

THESE words form a summing up, a finale to the statements just preceding them. Taken by itself the meaning of this verse would not be clear, as it seems to picture unfulfilled events as being already consummated. Obviously the words were spoken prophetically, foreshowing that the Lord will ultimately rise out of His holy habitation.

The narrative begins with verse 10, "Sing and rejoice, O daughter of Zion: for, lo, I come, and I will dwell in the midst of thee, saith the Lord." Future tense, "lo, I come, and I will dwell in the midst of thee." It is an event yet unrealized. In this way the Prophet advances the eschatological viewpoint. Things are not always to continue as they are; man is nearing the end of his time. There is to be an end of the present regime. The present social and political order is to be replaced by the Kingdom of God, which, as the "stone" of Nebuchadnezzar's vision (Dan. 2:34), is to grow and expand until it fills the whole earth. These are good tidings for the "daughter of Zion," the individuals who are longing and preparing for that

better day, living such lives as make them fit associates for the great King.

Zechariah 2:11 reveals another fact of that better age: "Many nations shall be joined to the Lord in that day, and shall be my people." God's great plan is destined to succeed. Contrary to the trend of the ages, right shall then prevail and evil be forced to retreat from the scene. And whereas up to the present time only a small minority, variously defined as the "handful of corn in the top of the mountain," "a very small remnant," "the fewest of all people," have come over on the Lord's side, then "many nations shall be joined to the Lord." A great reversal of the trend! Jesus revealed this in His post-ascension message, the book of Revelation, "And there were great voices in heaven, saying, The kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our Lord, . . . and he shall reign for ever and ever" (11:15).

"Many nations shall be joined to the Lord in that day." And in this forecast Jesus' area of authority is revealed to be the earth: "And the Lord shall inherit Judah his portion in the

holy land, and shall choose Jerusalem again." This also agrees with Jesus' first sermon, "Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth. . . . Swear not . . . by Jerusalem; for it is the city of the great King" (Matt. 5:5, 34-35).

It is assuring to know that God will not always be silent, that evidences of His existence and authority will not always be limited to the words of the Bible and our observations of nature and the visible universe. At last the Lord shall rise up out of His holy habitation. Immortal men from other portions of the habitable heavens will frequent this earth. Christ is coming with an "innumerable company of angels." God's power shall be seen at first hand, His authority felt in a manner that the most skeptical person cannot fail to understand. It will be a cause that demands submission—or else. The day of human drifting will be past. All who survive then must render outward obedience, no open manifestation of evil will be tolerated.

However, this plan, then universal, will not be entirely new. God-fearing souls, living at different periods during 6,000

years of human history, will have already developed such characters that they were completely silent in the presence of divine authority. True Christians of today are in this category. If reckoned among these we shall have surrendered our right to act, speak, or think, as our natural inclinations dictate. Isaiah 58:13 pictures this extraordinary accomplishment: "If thou turn away thy foot from the sabbath, from doing thy pleasure on my holy day; and call the sabbath a delight, the holy of the Lord, honorable; and shalt honor him, not doing thine own ways, nor finding thine own pleasure, nor speaking thine own words. . . ." The holy day or sabbath here indicated is our day of life, our day of probation, a day which must be spent wholly to God's glory.

In Ecclesiastes 5:2 this silence which is so golden is described in these words: "Be not rash with thy mouth, and let not thine heart be hasty to utter anything before God: for God is in heaven, and thou upon earth: therefore let thy words be few." Jesus also emphasized the importance of controlled speech when He said: "But I say unto you, That every idle [injurious] word that men shall speak, they shall give account thereof in the day of judgment. For by thy words thou shalt be justified, and by thy words thou shalt be condemned" (Matt. 12:36-37).

To be silent before God is not to be mute or voiceless; it is rather to restrict our speaking to the framework of divine Law. This thought is

contained in Matthew 12:35, "A good man out of the good treasure of the heart bringeth forth good things." God's law does not condemn that kind of talking. Again the apostle Peter reveals this type of speaking which is acceptable with God: "If any man speak, let him speak as the oracles of God" (I Pet. 4:11). And both the Psalmist and the apostle James speak of keeping our tongue with a bridle, so our speech will at all times be under rein.

The ruling group in God's future arrangement of things upon earth when Christ has become King, must all be individuals of merit. Three millenniums ago King David defined God's standard of excellence for all His administrators of law: "The God of Israel said, . . . He that ruleth over men must be just, ruling in the fear of God." No man or woman will be given authority over others in that new Government of the righteous, by the righteous, for the righteous, but those only who have learned to rule themselves, those who during their lifetime became silent in the presence of divine law.

When God rises up out of His holy habitation and sends His Son to earth to take the next step in the process for which the great plan was designed, there shall stand with Christ on Mount Zion one hundred forty and four thousand associate rulers (Rev. 14:1) who have become silent to the extent that they never speak a word of their own. Of them it is said in verse 5, "And in their mouth was found no guile: for they are without fault before the throne of God." ●●

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The Lord's Prayer

- I cannot say* **OUR** *if I live in a watertight spiritual compartment.*
- I cannot say* **FATHER** *if I do not demonstrate the relationship in my daily living.*
- I cannot say* **WHICH ART IN HEAVEN** *if I am so occupied with the earth that I am laying up no treasures there.*
- I cannot say* **HALLOWED BE THY NAME** *if I, who am called by His name, am not holy.*
- I cannot say* **THY KINGDOM COME** *if I am not doing all in my power to hasten its coming.*
- I cannot say* **THY WILL BE DONE** *if I am questioning, resentful of, or disobedient to His will for me.*
- I cannot say* **ON EARTH, AS IN HEAVEN** *if I am not prepared to devote my life here to His service.*
- I cannot say* **GIVE US THIS DAY OUR DAILY BREAD** *if I am living on past experience, or if I am an under-the-counter-shopper.*
- I cannot say* **FORGIVE US OUR TRESPASSES, AS WE FORGIVE THEM THAT TRESPASS AGAINST US** *if I harbor a grudge against anyone.*
- I cannot say* **LEAD US NOT INTO TEMPTATION** *if I deliberately place myself in a position to be tempted.*
- I cannot say* **DELIVER US FROM EVIL** *if I am not prepared to fight it in the spiritual realm with the weapon of prayer.*
- I cannot say* **THINE IS THE KINGDOM** *if I do not accord the King the discipline of a loyal subject.*
- I cannot say* **THINE IS THE POWER** *if I fear what men may do or what my neighbors may think.*
- I cannot say* **THINE IS THE GLORY** *if I am seeking glory for myself.*
- I cannot say* **FOREVER AND EVER** *if my horizon is bounded by the things of now.*

—Selected.

