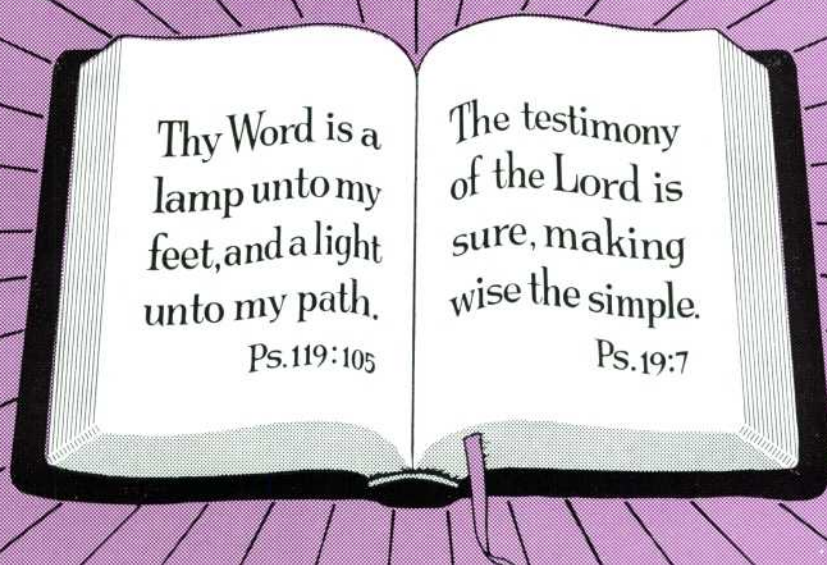


Megiddo Message

DEVOTED TO THE CAUSE OF CHRIST



Give Attendance to ... Doctrine

"And Five Were Foolish"?

Labeling and Curing

Understanding the Bible

EDITORIAL

Imagination Can Be Power

WE often associate imagination with daydreaming and wishful, aimless thinking. But it can be more, much more.

Imagination is a blessing or a curse, depending on how it is used and how it is disciplined. Imagination, undisciplined and unsanctified, is the fountainhead of pollution. Evil imaginations have caused countless ill feelings and divisions through the years.

A wholesome, directed imagination is quite another thing. It is a gift which enables us to "see" things which are not—whether an addition on the house, a new machine we are designing, a field of grain not yet planted, or simply the expected activities of the next few hours. If we had no imagination, there is very little we would be able to do.

Imagination can likewise be of great value in the service of God. Properly directed by knowledge and faith, it can provide a stimulus toward holy living and life in God's Kingdom that is nothing short of irresistible.

It might operate this way: You read in the Bible of the many virtues of noble character you long to develop in your own life, the holiness, peace, patience, and love God desires. Then you try mentally to implant in your own life, in your situation, these same qualities. You follow yourself through a typical day, imagining that you are as patient as Job, or as humble as Moses, or as courageous as Daniel, or as farsighted as Isaiah, or as persevering as Paul, or as close to God as Jesus. You picture *yourself* as having these qualities in *your* place of activity, doing *your* work, in *your* home, with *your* family. In this way you are able to see beyond the stumbling creature you are to that entirely new creature you long to be. In this way you are able to feel a certain measure of the joy and happiness of holiness, the real satisfaction that comes from pleasing God, and the assurance of the reality of the goal toward which you strive. You "see" things that be not as though they were until, by diligent application, *they actually are*. The image of the ideal has become *reality*.

A sanctified, directed imagination is a definite help in reproducing in our hearts and lives that fine moral sensitivity and spiritual awareness which blazed in the life of Christ. By it we can imagine what He might have said, or done, or felt in a situation such as we face, and can then go and do likewise.

Perhaps the greatest value of imagination is its power to turn the promises of God into an image of reality. Such imagination gives tremendous thrust to life here and now. What we know by faith we can visualize in our minds. And what we can visualize in our minds has unbelievable stimulating power.

By a God-directed, faith-powered imagination, we—mere mortals—can lift ourselves out of ourselves and tread even now in heavenly places. By it we can see in things natural the shadow of things spiritual.

Being bound by the limitations of mortality, we suffer from an inherent lack of vision in things spiritual. We see one moment: now. The future is vague and unreal.

But it need not be. What God has revealed of coming events is enough to keep us continually inspired, if we but focus our minds upon it. Read the Revelator's account of his preview of the heavenly commencement and coronation ceremonies (Rev. 5:9-14), events scheduled to take place right here on our earth in the not-too-distant future. Picture yourself among that exultant assembly of overcomers. Then listen as the angels sing congratulations to you and all your company for your supreme accomplishment, and hear the heavens ring with praises to the new King who shall reign "for ever, even for ever and ever."

It is a picture beyond the power of words to describe. It is more than our eyes have seen, more than our ears have heard, and more than our minds can conceive (I Cor. 2:9). But isn't this what God promised—"exceeding abundantly above" it all—even when we exercise our imagination to its finest limit! Such imagining is power. ●●

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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).

Megiddo Message

Vol. 64, No. 1

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EDITORIAL

2 Imagination Can Be Power

Picture the goal—and find a new source of power.

ARTICLES

4 "Give Attendance to . . . Doctrine"

It *does* matter what we believe—because God says so.

8 "And Five Were Foolish"?

The foolish virgins had much to their credit. But not enough.

11 Labeling and Curing

A thought on Jesus' casting out demons.

REGULAR FEATURES

10 Kathy Kander's Korner : *Why Hurt Yourself?*

When we react to others, we suffer.

13 Understanding the Bible : *The Resurrection and Judgment.* Who will be resurrected? Verses explained.

17 One Lord, One Faith : *People God Used, Part 6*

The days of the Northern Kingdom.

22 Out of the Archives : *The Epistle of Barnabas*

23 From Parent to Parent : *Take Time*

24 Our Readers Write

25 Scriptural Spotlight : *God Loves the Meek*

On Psalm 25:9. Meekness is beautiful, and Christlike.

26 Pro and Con

28 Cover Feature : *The Hundredfold—Plus*

Bible Quotations in this issue:

Unidentified quotations are from the King James Version

Other versions are abbreviated as: *New International Version* (NIV); *New English Bible* (NEB); *Revised Standard Version* (RSV); *The New Testament in Modern English* (Phillips).

"Give Attendance to . . . Doctrine"

BE strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus. . . . Be a good minister of Jesus Christ, nourished up in the words of faith and of good doctrine, whereunto thou hast attained. . . . Till I come, give attendance to reading, to exhortation, to doctrine" (II Tim. 2:1; I Tim. 4:6, 13).

In these words the apostle Paul admonishes his son-in-the-faith Timothy on a subject which is fundamental all through Scripture: *doctrine*. Although many of God's spokesmen mention it, few have so much to say as the apostle Paul, probably because Paul was living at a time when the first signs of apostasy were appearing in the churches, and he felt the need to alert his brethren to the danger. But his warnings have been preserved these twenty centuries for some purpose, so let us take note of them.

Wrong doctrine is a subject of condemnation, whoever might be its expounder. Said Paul: "Though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed" (Gal. 1:8). Of course, "An angel from heaven" would *not* "preach any other gospel"; Paul was merely using an extreme case to impress his point, namely, that anyone who would pervert the truth, or water it down, or minimize its significance, or abuse or corrupt it in any way, would be subject to the curse of God. Paul's language was strong, but the very core of the Christian message was at stake.

Paul sent a similar warning to the Church at Colosse: "Beware lest any man spoil you through philosophy and vain deceit, after the tradition of men, after the rudiments of the world, and not after Christ. . . . This I say, lest any man should beguile you with enticing words" (Col. 2:8, 4). He also alerted Titus to those who teach "things which they ought not" (Tit. 1:11).

Sound Doctrine

Paul prophesied in II Tim. 4:3 that "the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine." Let us define "sound doctrine." It is, first of all, *correct* doctrine, doctrine with no error in it, no bit of hearsay; nothing added. It is that kind

described in Titus 2:7-8, "... in doctrine showing uncorruptness, gravity, sincerity, sound speech that cannot be condemned. . ." To corrupt something is to add something foreign to it. Milk is pure as it comes from the cow; pure wool comes from the sheep—no cotton, rayon or synthetic is added. Pure doctrine is likewise what comes from the Word of God. And this factor is important to the believer.

Paul gave definite warning to Timothy on the subject of sound doctrine. "If any man teach otherwise," he wrote, "and consent not to wholesome words, even the words of our Lord Jesus Christ, and to the doctrine which is according to godliness; he is proud, knowing nothing, but dotting about questions and strifes of words, whereof cometh envy, strife, railings, evil surmisings, perverse disputings of men of corrupt minds, and destitute of the truth, supposing that gain is godliness: from such withdraw thyself" (I Tim. 6:3-5).

Moreover, sound doctrine is not only pure, it is *complete*. We speak of someone as being "safe and sound," meaning uninjured and with nothing missing. To say that something is as "sound as a dollar" means (or at least once meant) that it has full value. Soundness in doctrine is just that. It is what Paul called in Acts 20:27, "all the counsel of God."

In a second letter to Timothy, Paul gave even more specific warning, mentioning certain within the church who "concerning the truth have erred, saying that the resurrection is past already; and overthrow the faith of some" (II Tim. 2:16-18). Seditions within the church were always the most deadly and the most difficult to combat. As he wrote to the Romans, "Mark them which cause divisions and offences contrary to the doctrine which ye have learned; and avoid them. For they that are such serve not our Lord Jesus Christ, but their own selves; and by good words and fair speeches deceive the hearts of the simple" (Rom. 16:17-18).

The writer to the Hebrews issued a similar warning: "Be not carried about with divers and strange doctrines. For it is a good thing that the

heart be established with grace" (Heb. 13:9). And the apostle John completed the warning: "If there come any unto you, and bring not this doctrine, receive him not into your house [your fellowship or church], neither bid him God speed: for he that biddeth him God speed is partaker of his evil deeds" (II John 10-11).

Paul used this word "doctrine" twenty-five times (counting the three passages in Hebrews). In his Epistles he speaks of "my doctrine," "sound doctrine," and "doctrine according to godliness." He warns against diverse doctrine, strange doctrines, doctrines of men, doctrines of devils, contrary doctrine and winds of doctrine. An interesting illustration of his practical emphasis is in Titus 2: 1, where he exhorts Titus to speak "the things which become sound doctrine." Hence doctrine is an important element.

The climate of our day is one of intellectual pride, with the insistence that truth is relative and that nothing is absolute. Neat slogans are swallowed without even being tested. "We preach Christ, not a creed," we hear, and "let us propagate the gospel, not argue about it." It is true that the propagation of the gospel is important, but so is its accurateness. Let us sound forth the truth, but first let us make certain that what we sound forth *is the truth*. Proverbs 22:20-21 speaks with definiteness about sound teaching: "Have not I written to thee excellent things in counsels and knowledge, that I might make thee know the certainty of the words of truth; that thou mightest answer the words of truth to them that send unto thee?" This statement leaves no place for cavil or quibbling!

Beware of What You Eat!

Does it matter what we believe? Does it matter what we think about? Or, literally speaking, does it matter what food we eat?

Imagine a large room filled with people. There are cheerful expressions on all faces. The people are being served sandwiches, while an organ plays in the background. "My sandwich tastes like such lovely roast beef," says one. "Mine is turkey." "Mine tastes like fresh tomato and lettuce," says another. "Mine is peanut butter." And so on. What is the picture? Hungry people being nourished by good food? No one thinks anything else.

But in this flight of fancy, these "sandwiches" which are being served are filled with sawdust, cleverly flavored sawdust. Imitation bread, spread with imitation meat, imitation vegetables, and imitation peanut butter have been handed out and eagerly accepted, and the people have proceeded

to eat without asking any questions. They walk out satisfied, exclaiming over their delightful luncheon.

Impossible? Yes. What a tragedy if such could ever occur! And the man or woman who would devise such a scheme to harm his fellowmen would surely be judged criminally insane. Yet, in the realm of religion something quite parallel to this is happening all the time. People in need of spiritual nourishment are being handed what they assume to be spiritual food. It is dispensed in the name of Christ; and they accept it and eat it without asking any questions. Is it any wonder that spiritual vigor is lacking among them when what they are being fed is nothing more than cleverly flavored sawdust?

But let us check up on ourselves. How sure are we of what *we* are eating? Do we take what is handed us day after day and ingest it without giving serious thought to what it is or what it contains? Have we tested it until we can say with bold confidence that it is *not* sawdust, or even partly sawdust, or even one particle sawdust, but one hundred percent pure heavenly bread?

Surely we have some bland idea and confident satisfaction that what we believe is true, that what we are consuming is good for us. But do we go so far as to assume that it is all true and that therefore we needn't bother our minds too much about it, that we needn't give it too much thought or concentration? Suppose that suddenly our beliefs became for us—as they were for the Christians of

There are some who believe the Bible,
And some who believe a part;
Some trust with reservation,
And some with all their heart.
But I know that its every promise
Is firm and true always;
It is tried as the precious silver,
And it means just what it says.

It is strange we trust each other,
And only doubt our Lord;
We will take the word of mortals
Ahead of God's holy Word!
But, oh, what light and glory
Would shine through all our days
If we always would remember
That He means just what He says!

—Selected

the first century—a matter of life or death: Would we be prepared? Would we be ready to say with Paul, “*I know*”? Would our convictions hold?

It Does Matter!

It is a serious thing to realize that just as our physical food sustains our physical life, so what we feed our minds, what we think about, what we believe, determines our spiritual health and growth and strength. It *does* matter what we eat. It *does* matter what we think about. It *does* matter what we believe.

It is also a serious thing to realize that what we swallow is *our responsibility*. God invites us: “Come now, and let us reason together” (Isa. 1: 18). He appeals to our wills—“Come now”; and to our intellects—“let us reason together.” The omniscient God has given us the faculty of logical thought processes by which we may arrive at intelligent and responsible judgments. And He insists that we *use* what He has given us, to think responsibly about what we believe and what we accept as true. We are to evaluate what we hear, or in other words “try the spirits” (I John 4:1)—the prophets or teachers.

How are we to do this? With what are we to compare the various ideas that are set forth? With our own ideas and surmisings? Never! It is written, “My thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, saith the Lord. For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts” (Isa. 55:8-9). God has provided an unvarying standard which we may use in our efforts to “Prove all things.” We never have to wonder; we have His written Word.

We can thank God that ours has not been the prodigious task of discovering each principle of truth buried deep in centuries of superstition and error. He has given us an “excellent teacher,” a faithful servant through whose efforts the overall plan has been handed us in a logical, consistent and understandable form; every vital teaching is there available to us. All we have to do is to take, study, compare it with the Word of God, and then believe it. This was God’s noble provision for us, and we should be abundantly grateful.

But let us beware lest our acceptance of proven truths be too easy and too effortless, and therefore too valueless. If we are to obtain maximum benefit from the knowledge that is ours, there must be more than a bland, half-conscious acceptance. It is our duty to take each principle, test it for ourselves, and make it our own. Then we may say with understanding, “Amen, Lord, so let it be.”

Creed for Today?

I am aware that strong, creed-centered religion is not the style in many of the popular churches these days. In too many, there is not enough being believed with confidence for anyone to get too stirred up about, much less totally involved in. Spiritual lethargy is the result. And people, rather than dwelling on the great affirmations and certainties of their faith, begin to doubt their beliefs and believe their doubts. Let us beware!

Says one observer of the nominal church, “Christianity (so-called) amounts to little more than a vague spirit of friendliness, a willingness to support churches—provided these churches demand no real sacrifice and preach no exacting doctrines.”

Says another, “People seem to have stopped reading the Bible, stopped thinking about theology, sometimes, it seems, almost stopped thinking. They just go through the motions.”

Says another, speaking of his own faith, “We have slid into quicksands by thinking that what we believe is really not important at all. We held that simple goodness was the full demand of Christianity. We have said of one another: ‘He was not a church member, and I really don’t know what he believed—but he was such a good Christian.’ Nonsense! To be a Christian is to be something more than a nice man, a good fellow. It is a matter of belief and commitment. It is to put one’s life under the authority of Christ. It is to live out one’s life as a disciple of Christ.”

Says yet another who senses the danger: “We have lost the virile voice and the vital affirmation. We have neglected, or else forgotten, the basic beliefs of the Christian religion. Our minds and spirits have suffered from spiritual malnutrition. We have confused broadmindedness with emptyheadedness. The liberalism of another day has become a kind of nothingism today.”

God forbid that we should ever have to make such an admission on ourselves! We, who have in our grasp the pearl of great price—how can we “neglect” or “forget” the “basic beliefs of the Christian religion” and allow our faith to degenerate into a “broadmindedness” that is a “kind of nothingism”?

Yet the feeling that doctrine is not too important may appeal to us—not that we have anything against it, but we feel instinctively that practical matters are far more worthy of our time and thought. Let someone else worry about how to answer the various points of doctrine, we tell ourselves. “If I do what I know and live right, that is all God will expect of me.”

This may be true to a point, but is it a totally honest, undeceived judgment of ourselves? Let us be careful, for lazy-mindedness is born in every one of us. Who can say that he does not find it far easier to think about the trivia of every day—What shall we eat? What shall we wear? Where shall we go?—and so on. In a moment of candid honesty we might have to admit to ourselves that our dislike for doctrine is at least partly due to our dislike for the heavy, concentrated, disciplined thinking it requires. It is not a problem of insufficient time; it is not a problem of insufficient thought-power; for who of us can say we have not wasted many precious moments thinking about transient “nothings” that we *could have* spent in heavenly realms?

Right Knowledge Is Indispensable

Practical, everyday living is so important that any emphasis on points of doctrine may seem misdirected. The issues of life and death are bound up in the practical experiences of every day. How we react in trying situations, how we take the pin-pricks of contact with family, friends, and neighbors, how we show our loyalty to God at home and on the job, how we think and feel deep inside our heart when we are wronged or injured or misjudged or mistaken—these form the core of Christian living. These are the works for which we will be judged. To attempt to be saved by faith alone

(Continued on page 19)

Let Us Pray . . .

Merciful Father, once again we approach Thy throne thanking Thee for the numberless blessings that are ever flowing from Thy bountiful hand. We thank Thee for the preservation of our lives, for continued opportunity, for more time to do the things we have promised to do, and fit ourselves for a place in the world to come.

We thank Thee for the abundance of all things needful for our temporal existence, for the peace and order that we enjoy in our nation. We realize it has not always been thus. Many times Thy people in past ages were destitute and afflicted, living in dens and caves of the earth, despairing of their very existence, while our lines have been cast in such pleasant places.

But help us not to set our hearts upon these things, or be lifted up in our pride as though these blessings have come to us through any virtue or worthiness of our own. May we always remember that Thou givest and canst take away, so that whatever our lot we may be prepared to say, we know that all things are working together for our good.

Thanks for the Bible, and the understanding that we have of it. We rejoice that the knowledge of Thy saving truth has been entrusted to us. We are the inheritors of the ages; to us has been re-

vealed Thy magnificent plan for the earth and mankind, truths that are unknown to the wise and prudent of this world. Help us always to be *superior* stewards of this superior wisdom, never wrapping our talent in a napkin, or hiding our light under a bushel, or attempting to put the new wine—Thy saving gospel—into the old bottle of an unregenerated life.

May our hope be a real hope to us. May we know whom we have believed, and what we believe, and why. We rejoice that Thy Word is so plain, Thy doctrine so logical, Thy Word a thorough furnisher to all good works, Thy rewards so magnificent.

May we know the certainty of the words of truth, and be ready always to give an answer to everyone who asks of us a reason for the hope that is in us, so we may speak forth convincingly our trust in Thy great and precious promises. Thy Word does not ask of us a cowardly defense, but may be rigidly questioned on every matter upon which it ventures to speak.

Help us to adorn Thy true doctrine by right living, aware that it is not he who says Lord, Lord, that shall be accepted, but only he who remembers Thy commandments to do them. May this be our earnest endeavor.

Be with Thy work in all its forms, with all who are striving to learn and live Thy holy way. Forgive us for the sins we have turned from and forsaken, and lead us in the way everlasting. For Thine is the Kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever. Amen.

"And Five Were Foolish"?

AND five of them were wise, and five were foolish" (Matt. 25:2).

"And five were foolish"?—no, modern standards of tolerance would not judge them so harshly. Unfortunate, perhaps. Victims of unforeseen circumstances, but not foolish!

There is so much that may be set down to their credit.

For one thing, they were friends of the bridegroom. And the bridegroom, remember, stands for Christ. The "foolish" bridesmaids, then, do not represent those who show no interest in God or His plans, nor are they those whose interest is only show and hypocrisy. Rather, they represent professing Christians, those who have established a working relationship with God and who are sincere as far as they go. True, they do not go far enough, but there is nothing wrong at the beginning.

Next, to the credit of the "foolish" bridesmaids, note these words: They "went forth to meet the bridegroom." It does not say how far they journeyed, how long it took, or to what inconvenience they were put. That did not matter. They were not just casual friends of the bridegroom. They were interested in Him. They were actively interested in Him. They wanted to meet Him, to extend Him a welcome, to add each a little more of joy to His already brimming cup. They "went forth."

Here are good intentions, here are high aspirations, here are glowing ideals. And here is effort in the right direction—they "went forth to meet the bridegroom"!

Set this down to their credit also: "They took their lamps." Merely to meet the bridegroom, that was not enough. It was their intention to *welcome* him. Some people might have felt the effort of going forth to meet the bridegroom sufficient in itself. The dishonor of giving to God only the ashes of a burned-out life never bothers them at all. But these five "foolish" ones went forth to meet the bridegroom—not empty-handed but with shining lamps!

And they went to the right place. There were many roads over which the bridegroom did not travel that night. To have waited by any of these

would have been folly indeed.

We might ask ourselves—are we doing as well as these five foolish virgins? Have we put all our effort into going forth to meet the Bridegroom? Have we placed ourselves where He is accustomed to pass? along the path of obedience and earnest prayer? Have we taken our lamps, ready to give Him our warmest welcome? Is all our thought on the arrival of the Bridegroom?

One more thing we should observe about these foolish virgins—they arrived ahead of time. Procrastination has been the ruin of many, but these "foolish" bridesmaids were not procrastinators. Theirs was not the fault expressed by the poet:

Late, late, so late! and dark the night and chill!
Late, late, so late! but can we enter still—?
... *Late, late, too late! Ye cannot enter now.*

Have we not heard the bridegroom is so sweet?
Oh, let us in, though late, to kiss his feet.
... *No, no, too late! Ye cannot enter now.*

Many fail because they put it off too long. But not the five "foolish" bridesmaids. They were by the side of the road waiting, long before the bridegroom came.

And so, to their credit we note one thing more—their patience. "While the bridegroom tarried," they did not complain, or criticize, or go home "in a huff," so to speak. Some lose out in receiving God's blessings because they are too impatient to wait. But not these five bridesmaids. "The door was shut" against them, but not because they had not started early enough.

What was the trouble? If it was not indifference, or ignorance, or procrastination, or impatience, what about these five virgins caused Jesus to classify them as foolish?

What was their folly? *They did not provide for the unexpected.* They failed the test of time.

These virgins provided up to a point. They took oil in their lamps. But they carried no supply for replenishing. This is the one distinction between the two groups of maidens. The "wise" brought with them an extra vessel each—what if the bridegroom should arrive later than they anticipated?

They might need to refuel. They did not *expect* any delay, but they prepared for it anyway. The "foolish" did not carry this extra preparation. They were prepared fully, if everything worked out as they expected. So up until midnight their lamps were just as bright as any. No one seeing them waiting at that hour could have guessed which would be wise and which would be foolish. And had the bridegroom arrived before that time, everything would have been all right. It was the unexpected delay that caught them unprepared.

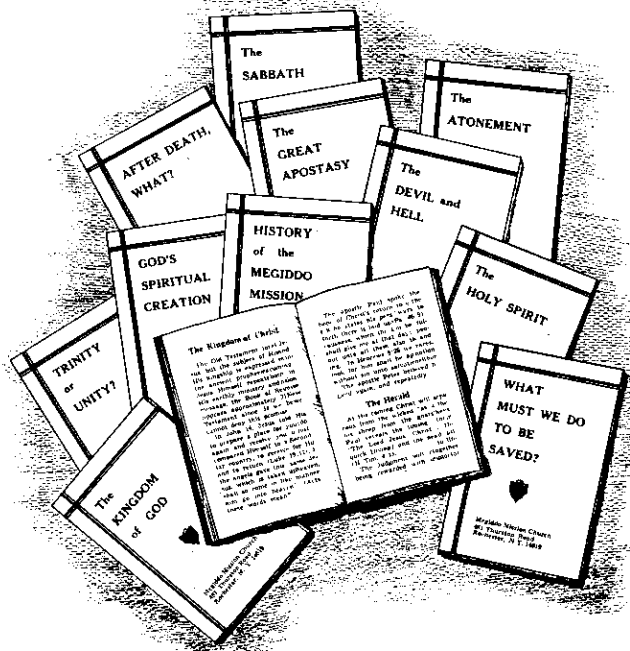
What was the oil of which they did not provide enough? It was the oil of faith. It is faith that makes our characters bright and glowing. It is faith that gives us radiance and light. It is faith that keeps us watching and waiting, working, expecting the arrival of the Bridegroom at any time. It is faith that keeps us looking beyond for the greater rewards which God has in store for those who serve Him faithfully.

The "foolish" virgins had faith—in limited supply. They had faith that the Bridegroom would arrive, or they would not have taken the trouble to go forth to meet Him. And they realized the need for this important oil. When their lamps started to go out, they did not forsake the whole enterprise and tell themselves they had made a great error even to attempt to meet Him. No, they left immediately with but one objective—to renew their supply. But to their dismay, they found that this special oil is not available on the open market. It must be acquired and stored *before* the crisis hour.

How is our supply? Is our faith sufficient to carry us through every trial and every delay that may intervene in our lives? Will it sustain the light in our lamps until the Bridegroom finally arrives?

Let's check it daily, and keep adding to our reserve, lest, while the Bridegroom seems to tarry, our lights be going out! ●●

Good Reading



for You -- and

your Friends

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ABIB Is Coming!

Abib 1, the first day of the sacred New Year and the day on which the Megiddo Church observes the birth of Christ, falls this year on March 20, beginning at sundown March 19.

Bible time being lunar time, the date of the arrival of the New Year is determined by the moon, the first new moon upon or after the vernal equinox. This year the new moon and the equinox nearly coincide, there being only twenty-four hours between. The new moon occurs on March 19, the Spring Equinox on March 20. The next new moon occurs on April 18.

January, 1977

In such instances, there is historical evidence that the Israelites of Bible times observed the new moon nearest the equinox to avoid the variation of nearly a month. In this way their harvest festivals (Passover, occurring on Abib 14, and Pentecost, fifty days later) fell at approximately the right season.

The March 20 date is also confirmed by the 19-year lunar cycle of dates, the same date recurring every 19 years in a pattern which follows with little variation.

Plan now to join us during the coming sacred season in honor of our coming King! ●●

Kathy
Kandor's
Korner

Why Hurt Yourself?

I don't believe you know what it's like to try to work with anyone so cantankerous. Ethel just makes my blood boil! She just seems to go out of her way to be disagreeable. It's a fact. For my sake the whole family has tried to get along with her—without success.

I try to forget about her, or pretend she isn't there. But she is. I close my ears to her words, but they still find their way in and they grind me to the bone. I even find myself thinking about her when she isn't anywhere around. I try pushing such thoughts into the background and forgetting them. But they just won't stay there.

This is the way it used to be, until one day I happened upon a verse in Psalms. "The Lord is on my side; I will not fear: what can man do unto me?" (118:6). I found myself repeating those last words over and over again. "What can man do unto me?" Yet, Ethel was surely doing *something* to me.

Or was she? The more I thought about it, the more I realized Ethel wasn't doing anything to hurt *me*—I was hurting myself by the way I was reacting to *her*. Isn't that really what you are saying when you describe how someone else affects you? When you think somebody is a "pain in the neck," whose neck hurts? Or when someone gets under your skin, whose skin is affected? Maybe someone makes you turn green with envy, or red with anger—who suffers the color change? Somebody makes your blood boil—whose misery is it? In all cases, the person who causes the trouble is not affected; it is those who allow themselves to be affected by it who suffer. We don't injure the person who disturbs us; *we harm ourselves*.

Did this mean, then, that *I* was to blame for the trouble with Ethel? I'm afraid that's right. I was to blame because I was allowing *her* to determine

my feelings. I was allowing her to impose her ugly or mean feelings and frustrations on me.

I know Ethel was wrong. I know she had a disposition she could not (or *did* not) control. But my disturbed feelings are just as wrong in God's sight as her meanness.

There is a Bible verse which says all this: "Great peace have they which love thy law, and nothing shall offend them."

That's right—nothing. Other people don't do anything to you. It is *you* who allow other people to cause *you* to do something to *yourself*. You hold the controls. If Ethel wants to be cantankerous, that doesn't have to disturb *your* peace of mind. Not in the least. It's a fact. If your mind is stayed on God, nothing and no one can disturb your inner peace.

I'm talking to myself, but maybe I've said something that will help you sometime—if you should ever encounter a cantankerous Ethel. After all, who wants to go through life hurting himself?

Yours for more calm and control,

Kathy

From A Reader—

Even In India!

I am glad to know that when the whole world is running the mad race of falsehood and tradition and business, we, some of us at least, are not falling a prey to these cults of the world. In this we are at common effort and likemindedness. This is a season of sin, drunkenness and loose living, sexual vice and other atrocities throughout the world, in the name of Xmas. As it is in the West, so also in India, though of course in a small measure, for this country of ours not having the traditional background of Christianity as in the West, has many centuries to go to know what it all means (Xmas, I mean). But even then, the business world in India has caught up to the tempo of the Xmas gaiety. We see the lights of decoration everywhere with bearded Santa beckoning the waysiders.

My heart suffers badly to see this sinful habit of Xmas betraying the Lord Jesus and His blameless name, which is spoiled in the festivity of Xmas. But alas! how could we control this evil tide?

All we who know the truth can do is to not conform ourselves to these evil practices of this world, but keep ourselves aloof from them.

—Mr. S. P., Bangalore, India

Labeling and Curing

Everyone knows that calling a dog's tail a leg never made a five-legged dog. This bit of wisdom, often credited to Abraham Lincoln, illustrates a basic fact: Whatever name we choose to assign to a particular object, process, or idea has no effect upon the nature of that object, process or idea. All things are what they are, whatever the label we place upon them.

This same reasoning may be applied to a term used often in Scripture to identify the cause of a disease: demon, or devil. When Jesus, in the words of the Scripture writers, "cast out demons," He was removing the cause of the illness and restoring the afflicted person to a state of health. The associating of the term "demon" with "disease" did not suggest that Jesus or His apostles believed demons caused sickness; they were simply communicating the miracle in terms which the people of that day could understand. At that time people generally assumed that disease was caused by demons, and that to recover one had first to cast out the demon.

In the same sense we might take Jesus' words to the man He was about to heal: "Thy sins be forgiven thee." Not that Jesus believed sin to be the cause of physical suffering, but many people of the time assumed this and Jesus' saying "Thy sins be forgiven thee" was the same to them as His saying to us, "The virus is gone; you are well now."

One of our readers, who is a doctor of psychiatry by profession, has contributed some thoughts on this subject which we thought might be of interest to our readers.

The Process of Labeling

by Jerry Bergman

In the process of helping someone with a mental or emotional problem, concern is often with diagnosing the problem, defining and labeling it. The problem we will deal with here is the labeling process, stressing that the labeling is beneficial only if it helps us realize the cause, and this is beneficial only if it helps us solve the problem.

Labeling should be a method of summarizing the cause. But with many conditions, the science of labeling has severe problems. For example, a deviant sexual behavior or act may be termed by a minister as a "sin," by a psychotherapist as a "sickness," by a sociologist as "dysfunctional adjustment problem." The labeling varies. But regardless of the label used, the persons using it are attempting a similar goal—to change the future behavior of the offender.

Regardless of what label the deed is given, the

original deed remains. It is the person's *perception* of that deed which he must deal with. The label does not change the deed.

In helping people, it is often best *not* to label. In this regard it is interesting to study Jesus' method of diagnosis. Most often He simply accepted the patient's diagnosis, i.e., He did not redefine the problems of the patient in a new language. Jesus used *their* language for their problem, not arguing as to what they called their condition. If the man said he was blind, Jesus responded by saying "You are blind, I will give you sight." If the patient defined his problem as sin, Jesus said, "Your sins are forgiven, go and sin no more." If the patient defined his problem as being possessed with demons, Jesus stated, "Your demons are cast out." If a patient defined his problem as being struck with epilepsy, Jesus responded by saying, "Your epilepsy is cured." Thus Jesus communicated each of His patient's problems in the patient's terms—if they were sick, He healed them; if they were plagued with sin, He forgave them; if they were demonized, He cast out their demons. This helps us to understand that the common mis-

conception in Jesus' day, that disease was caused by demons, was actually not taught by Jesus. He was not teaching the origin of disease or giving a medical lecture; He was simply meeting and defining the problem according to the definition which the patient himself gave his problem.

Why is this so?

Jesus probably could have explained in detail what was wrong with the person, but would this have helped? If the person believed his affliction was caused by demons, could not Jesus solve the real problem and then respond in the patient's own language, "Your demons are cast out, you are well"?

Realizing that Jesus defined the affliction in the patient's own terms helps us understand that He was not teaching disease is caused by demons, as misconstrued by many today, nor was He teaching that disease (or anything else) is caused by demons; He simply met His patients on their own terms—something which all medical doctors and all (especially) psychotherapists do today. I cannot converse with a patient in German if he cannot speak and understand German; likewise I cannot use complex medical jargon if he does not understand it. To communicate with him I have to communicate on *his* level, in terms *he* can understand. A surgeon removed a neoplasm from a patient who constantly referred to "that bump." After the surgery, the doctor, instead of saying that he "extradited the neoplasm," told the patient simply, "We removed that bump; you should be fine now."

Another patient continually called germs "bugs." While he was being given a shot, the patient asked the doctor what the shot was for. The doctor responded in the patient's own vernacular: "To kill those bugs," instead of using medical terminology such as "This is an anti-biotic, germicide," etc.

Because Jesus did not contradict the common people's assumptions that many maladies were caused by demons does not mean He accepted their definition of the problem any more than the doctor above accepted the idea that the injection was to "kill bugs."

One problem with the use of the word "demon" is that the Greek word for demons means "adversary," a word commonly used as an adjective. Realizing that much disease is caused by micro-organisms, we today can see the word demon as actually quite appropriate. Germs are usually defined as micro-organisms, which are "adversaries" to the life process of the organism they are invading. Such organisms that oppose the system could logically be called adversaries, or demons, in

that they oppose the health of the patient.

This is evidently why Jesus, when sending forth the twelve, gave orders to "heal the sick, cleanse the lepers, raise the dead, cast out devils" (Matt. 10:8). Actually, all they were doing in each case was curing sick people; leprosy is a sickness; what people thought were demons inside a person was also a sickness; thus Jesus was meeting each patient on his own ground, using the label the patient understood. The label did not matter, if only the person could be helped to transcend the crippling effects of the problem. ●●

THIS N' THAT

It's just a good thing God above
Has never gone on strike,
Because He wasn't treated fair
Or things He didn't like.
If He had ever once sat down
And said, "That's it, I'm through,
I've had enough of those on earth,
So this is what I'll do:

I'll give my orders to the sun,
Cut off your heat supply,
And to the moon: Give no more light,
And run those oceans dry!
Then, just to really make it tough,
And put the pressure on,
Turn off the oxygen and air
Till every breath is gone."

Do you know, He'd be justified
If fairness were the game,
For no one has been more abused
Or treated with disdain
Than GOD—and yet He carries on
Supplying you and me
With all the favors of His grace
And everything—for FREE!

Men say they want a better deal
And so on strike they go,
But what a deal we've given God,
Whom everything we owe.
We don't care whom we hurt or harm,
To gain the things we like,
But what a mess we'd all be in
If God should go on strike!

—Author Unknown.

MEGIDDO MESSAGE

UNDERSTANDING THE BIBLE

"Study to shew thyself approved unto God."

The Resurrection and Judgment

MEN have an inborn desire for life. Nevertheless, one of the hard facts of life is death. The "king of terrors" cannot be escaped. "Remember this," said the wise King David, "wise men must die; stupid men, brutish men, all perish. The grave is their eternal home, their dwelling for all time to come; they may give their own names to estates, but they must leave their riches to others. For men are like oxen whose life cannot last, they are like cattle whose time is short. Such is the fate of foolish men and of all who seek to please them" (Ps. 49:10-13, NEB).

The ancient prophet Job wrote in a similar vein: "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. . . . But man dieth, and wasteth away: yea, man giveth up the ghost, and where is he? So man lieth down, and riseth not: . . . [he] shall not awake, nor be raised out of [his] sleep" (Job 14:1, 2, 10, 12). But, said the Prophet, "There is hope of a tree, if it be cut down, that it will sprout again, and that the tender branch thereof will not cease" (v. 7).

Can it be that there is more hope for a tree than for a man? Is this life all we can expect? Must everything end in the grave? Need the grave be **our** eternal home, **our** "dwelling for all time to come"? Are all humans to be likened to oxen or to cattle that live for a few years and then disappear in nonentity?

No, King David knew of a certainty that the grave would not be his eternal resting place; only the heathen, those who never knew God or promised to serve Him, will sleep eternally in the grave. Of himself David said, "But God will redeem my soul [me] from the power of the grave: for he shall receive me" (Ps. 49:15), or as rendered in the New English Bible, "God will ransom my life, he will take me from the power of Sheol [the grave]."

Although many words of Job sound as though he

wrote from the depths of despair, he later asked, "If a man die shall he live again?" And in an exultant mood, he answered his own query: "All the days of my appointed time will I wait till my change come. Thou shalt call, and I will answer. . ." (Job 14:14-15). He later voiced his hope in a resurrection from the dead (Job 19:23-27), as did the Psalmist.

These inspired writers knew that some would rise, but others would not. In this lesson we will study this feature of the resurrection, who will rise and the state of the resurrected body.

II. THE RESURRECTED

What a gathering that will be! Picture the glory of that meeting in the air when the resurrected dead, together with the living covenant-makers, meet Christ and His angels at His return!

Who will be there? We have alluded to the fact that the group consists of the covenant-makers of all the 6000 years. Who compose the throng? How many are there? Let us go to the Bible to determine who will be there—and who will not.

A. The Resurrected—Who Are They?

Who shall rise from the grave? Some would answer, "All who ever lived and died on this earth." Others would say, "Only the righteous will be raised at Christ's coming; the wicked wait in the grave for 1000 years."

Which answer is correct? Neither! God never promised to restore to life all who ever lived on the earth, nor did He say that He would raise the righteous and wicked at two separate resurrections 1000 years apart. For only the righteous to be raised would require a judgment at death or while in the death state—an impossibility, an idea contrary to Scripture.

1. Who will NOT rise. We learn from the Bible that there is a class of people who never knew God, hence never promised to serve Him, and who will not be required to answer to Him for their deeds or misdeeds. This includes the great masses of mankind throughout the ages. We identify them as the **ungodly or heathen class**. They are spoken

of by the prophet Jeremiah as those that "shall sleep a perpetual sleep, and not wake" (Jer. 51:57). The Psalmist identifies them as being "like the beasts that perish... they shall go to the generation of [their] fathers; they shall never see light" (Ps. 49:20, 19), and Obadiah says that they shall "be as though they had not been" (v. 16).

The book of Job has much to say about this class: "The triumph of the wicked is short-lived, the glee of the godless lasts but a moment. Though he stands high as heaven, and his head touches the clouds, he will be swept utterly away like his own refuse, and all that saw him will say, 'Where is he?' He will fly away like a dream and be lost, driven off like a vision of the night; the eye which glimpsed him shall do so no more and shall never again see him in his place" (Job 20:5-9, NEB).

Paul also wrote of this same class who never knew God or His law: "For as many as have sinned without law shall also perish without law..." (Rom. 2:12). Those who lived and died without knowing the law of God will not be resurrected since they are not amenable to judgment. They will not be held responsible for a law they never knew. They will be among those who "sleep a perpetual sleep," who are "like the beasts that perish," who disappear "like a vision of the night," and will "be as though they had not been."

2. Who will rise? When Jesus met Martha at the time of the death of Lazarus, He comforted her with the words: "Thy brother shall rise again." Martha answered, "I know that he shall rise again in the resurrection at the last day" (John 11:23-24). Martha knew that there was to be a resurrection at the last Day and she knew that her brother would be among those who would rise. Jesus used the death of Lazarus to show the power of God to raise the dead. Lazarus was restored to mortal life, but not being immortal, he died at some later time and will indeed stand in the resurrection at the last Day.

It is only those who have covenanted to serve God who will be raised at the Resurrection. This will include faithful and unfaithful servants. Because their status has not been determined before death, they must stand at the Judgment. In Jesus' parable of the nobleman going into a far country, it was his servants that were called to give account when the nobleman returned (Luke 19:12-15). Not all of the servants proved faithful, as evidenced by the parable.

The prophet Daniel foresaw a time when "many of them that sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake," some faithful and some unfaithful (Dan. 12:2). **Many**, not **all**, will awake in the resurrection.

Paul before Felix testified that there "shall be a resurrection of the dead, both of the just and unjust" (Acts 24:15). Those who never knew God's law could not be judged by it. But both righteous and wicked, faithful and unfaithful, just and unjust will be resurrected and stand together at the Judgment. (This subject will be covered in a later section of this study.)

Isaiah said "**Thy** dead men shall live," not all dead men, but those recognized by God as having agreed to serve Him.

3. How many will rise? It is almost universally believed by so-called Christian churches that all who ever lived upon the earth will share in the resurrection. But this is not according to Scripture. **There is no such thing as a universal resurrection. Only those who have heard and learned God's law and then agreed to live by it will be judged by that law.** This limits those who will rise to the covenant-makers.

The prophet Daniel had a vision of the Judgment scene (Dan. 7:10): "Ten thousand times ten thousand"—one hundred million people, were seen standing before the Judge seated upon His throne, the covenant-makers of the 6,000-year day of salvation. The majority of these will have been brought from the grave to join the comparatively few living covenant-makers for the Judgment.

B. The Resurrected—How Do They Come Forth?

If you were to ask a member of the clergy concerning the state of those resurrected, the most likely answer would be that they come from the grave immortal, incorruptible. Paul's statement, "The dead shall be raised incorruptible" (I Cor. 15:52), would probably be offered as proof.

This is the generally accepted belief: All those who died believing in Christ will be raised from the grave immortal at His coming. But it is a belief read **into** the Scriptures—not read **out of** the Scriptures. Theology has so long accepted the immortal soul theory that they have attached an immortal body to it, making the resurrection body immortal.

This doctrine is contrary to the Scriptures. The resurrected covenant-makers are simply restored to mortal life in order that they may stand at the Judgment. To say that they come from the grave immortal is to say that they have been judged while in the death state and found faithful, something entirely foreign to the Scriptures. It also negates the Judgment, for if they have already been judged faithful before the resurrection, what need would there be for a Judgment? How could the Judge divide them "as a shepherd divideth his

sheep from the goats," if only sheep stood before Him?

1. Mortal, not immortal. Wide acceptance does not automatically render a doctrine true. Just because the majority of those who profess belief in a resurrection also believe that the body comes from the grave immortal does not make it so. As before stated, **this belief is contrary to Scripture. Man is mortal when he goes to the grave and mortal when resurrected. The resurrection simply restores him to the level of the living.**

Writing to the Corinthians, Paul says, "We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed. . . . For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality" (I Cor. 15:51, 53). **No one could "put on" something he already had on. Both living and resurrected believers must undergo this change to immortality. If it were their present state, it could not be said to be a change. It is not a possession of the living, nor is it bestowed in the grave. Not until Christ comes and men are resurrected and judged will they be made immortal. At the present time Christ only has immortality (I Tim. 6:16).**

The prophecy of Daniel concerning the resurrection may have contributed to this misunderstanding. The prophecy reads: "And many of them that sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life, and some to shame and everlasting contempt" (12:2). The majority of people assume from reading these words that the prophet meant that all would come from the grave immortal, some to live eternally in heaven with the Father, while others suffer eternal punishment in shame for their evil doing.

This is another case of a belief being read into not out of the Scriptures. It was not God's plan that men's status should be pre-determined, but that all should stand before the Judge together. The resurrection must necessarily precede the judgment, restoring to life both faithful and unfaithful servants. Whether they are worthy of everlasting life or everlasting death rests with the Judge.

2. Flesh, not spirit. There are some who picture those resurrected as mere phantoms or spirits, as immaterial beings as opposed to material beings. They say that Jesus was raised from the dead as a spirit, but with the power to assume a material body. Such a belief savors of the immortal soul theory, which is totally unsound and unscriptural; for what would an invisible spirit be more than an invisible soul?

The Bible is definite in respect to the resurrection body; **it is physically functional and recogniz-**

able as the person that died. During His ministry, Jesus restored mortal life to three people: the daughter of Jairus, the widow's son, and Lazarus. Some time after Lazarus was raised, Jesus returned to Lazarus' home and "they made him a supper," and "Lazarus was one of them that sat at the table with him" (John 12:2). After the little girl was raised, Jesus "commanded to give her meat" (Luke 8:55), and to the widow's son, he said, "Young man, I say unto thee, Arise. And he that was dead sat up, and began to speak" (Luke 7:15). All were able to function as normal people. These individuals were raised to mortal life only; they now sleep in the grave, waiting the resurrection.

The Scriptures are very clear concerning Jesus' physical state after His resurrection and before His glorification. He was recognized as a man as He walked to Emmaus (Luke 24:15); Mary mistook Him for the gardener near the tomb (John 20:15); He prepared a meal for the fishermen and ate with them (John 21:9-13); He invited them to touch Him, saying "a spirit hath not flesh and bones, as ye see me have." He asked for food, "and they gave him a piece of a broiled fish, and of an honeycomb. And he took it, and did eat before them" (Luke 24:41-43). He was the same Jesus that had died and had been placed in the tomb only a short time before.

Others that stand in the resurrection will likewise be recognizable. Jesus spoke of seeing "Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, and all the prophets, in the kingdom of God" (Luke 13:28), indicating that they would be known at sight. The ancient prophet Job expected to see his Redeemer: "For I know that my Redeemer liveth, and that he shall stand at the latter day upon the earth: and though after my skin worms destroy this body, yet in my flesh shall I see God: whom I shall see for myself, and mine eyes shall behold, and not another" (Job 19:25-27).

C. Verses Explained

When we study a Bible subject, we often find texts that on surface reading seem to contradict the teaching contained in another verse. In such cases, it is necessary to compare the verse with other texts on the subject in order to arrive at the true teaching of the Bible. There are some verses on the resurrection that would fall into the category of "hard to be understood," which we will discuss in order to get a better understanding.

1. Luke 14:14. "And thou shalt be blessed; for they cannot recompense thee: for thou shalt be recompensed at the resurrection of the just." This text is frequently used to prove that only the

just or good people rise in the resurrection at Christ's coming. But that is only assumed; both just and unjust must stand at the Judgment to be divided. That the verse simply refers to the resurrection is evident from the rendering in the **Philips Bible**: "They have no means of repaying you, but you will be repaid when good men are rewarded—at the resurrection." Rewards are determined after good and evil servants are separated.

2. **John 5:28-29**. "Marvel not at this: for the hour is coming, in the which all that are in the graves shall hear his voice, And shall come forth; they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of damnation." This verse is greatly misunderstood. It is used both to prove a universal resurrection, and two resurrections—one for the good and one for the evil.

The Bible does not support the widely accepted view of a general resurrection, as discussed earlier in this lesson. Rather, it is specifically stated that "the ungodly shall not stand in the judgment, . . . but the way of the ungodly shall perish" (Ps. 1:5-6). The only reward of the ungodly, those who never knew God or promised to serve Him, is this present life.

The misunderstanding of the verse arises from the phrase "all that are in the graves." Theology takes the broad view that "all" in the graves includes all people who ever lived upon this earth. Such a view is not supported by general Bible teaching. What did Jesus mean?

The problem lies in a misunderstanding of Greek grammar. The Greek language had no indefinite article such as "a" or "an." The article "the" is much used, but it is a **definite** article. According to **Essentials of New Testament Greek**, by Ray Summers (Broadman Press, 1950), this makes a tremendous difference in the interpretation of the New Testament. In all probability the definite article was originally a demonstrative pronoun. It retains that force frequently in the New Testament. The basic function of the article is to "identify" the noun, hence when we read "all . . . in the graves" it has reference to some particular graves, meaning some specific graves. The graves referred to in the text in question would be the graves of all those who had heard and learned of God and agreed to serve Him during their natural lifetime—the covenant-makers—not every primitive, heathen, Asian or Caucasian that ever lived upon the earth.

All covenant-makers will be restored to mortal life to face the Judgment, where the Judge will say to those on His right hand, "Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you"

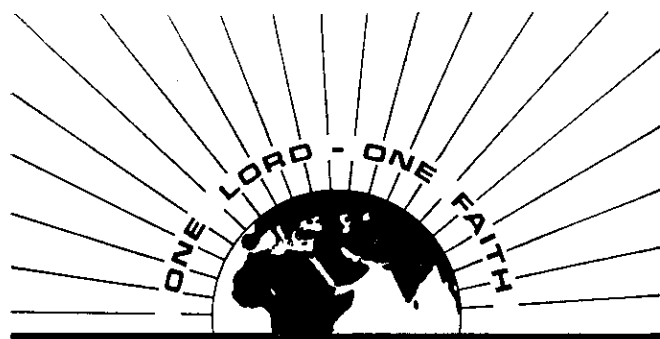
—the "resurrection of life"; and "Then shall he say also unto them on the left hand, Depart from me"—the "resurrection of damnation" (Matt. 25:34, 41). **Both good and evil stand together at the Judgment. Nowhere is there any evidence of a separate resurrection for good and evil servants.**

3. **II Corinthians 5:1-4**. "For we know that if our earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved, we have a building of God, an house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens. For in this we groan, earnestly desiring to be clothed upon with our house which is from heaven."

In II Corinthians 5 immortality is described as a heavenly possession. Theology has read into this text the idea that believers go to heaven to claim this prize. But let us examine the text: "For we know that if our earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved, we have a building of God, an house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens. For in this we groan, earnestly desiring to be clothed upon with our house which is from heaven: if so be that being clothed we shall not be found naked. For we that are in this tabernacle do groan, being burdened: not for that we would be unclothed, but clothed upon, that mortality might be swallowed up of life" (vs. 1-4).

The wording indicates clearly that our "house" from heaven is immortality. We "groan," or yearn for it, that we might be no longer mortal. We long for the better life, **but we do not go to heaven to get it. The prize of immortality, or eternal life, is said to be "eternal in the heavens," but it is not eternally or forever to remain in heaven, nor do mortals go to heaven to obtain it.** The New English Bible renders the phrase, "We possess a building which God has provided—a house not made by human hands, eternal, and in heaven." It is **eternal and it is in heaven until Christ returns to bring it to us.** "For our [citizenship] is in heaven, from which also we look for the Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall change our [lowly] body, that it may be fashioned like his glorious body" (Phil. 3:20-21, Scofield). "Behold, I come quickly and my reward is with me . . ." (Rev. 22:12). **The reward that comes with Christ is immortality, eternal life, from God the Father in heaven.**

*Reprints of these studies available,
10 cents per copy.*



People God Used

Part 6

We have traced the people God was using through the time of King Solomon.

The people as a nation had great opportunity, both temporally and spiritually. But they were, like we so often are, blind to their own best interests. Solomon reveled in luxury, but the glory could not last. The Lord could give; but when the honor and glory and power were misused, God could also take away.

Let us sketch Israel's history through the difficult years that followed.

The Kingdom Divided

After the death of Solomon, his son Rehoboam ascended the throne. At once there came a delegation to him headed by a man named Jeroboam. They were unhappy with the intolerable taxation Solomon had levied to support his elaborate court and royal government, and wanted relief. Rehoboam, guided by the foolish counsel of his hot-headed young men, replied roughly, "My little finger is thicker than my father's loins" (I Kings 12:1-20). Or, in other words, "If you think my father was hard on you, wait and see what *I* will do."

This was not what the men of Israel wanted to hear, and they went home to organize a revolt. As a result, the whole northern portion of the kingdom revolted against Rehoboam and set up Jeroboam as their king. Thus was divided the proud Kingdom of Israel, the ten northern tribes joining to form the independent Northern Kingdom, which retained the name Israel. The southern remnant was known as the Kingdom of Judah, its main territory being that belonging to the tribe of Judah.

The Northern Kingdom under Jeroboam

In the Northern Kingdom, or Israel, Jeroboam set the pattern for years to come. Fearing that the

people would be alienated from him if they went regularly to Jerusalem to worship (Jerusalem was located in the southern Kingdom), Jeroboam devised a system of worship totally "new" in Israel. The people would be more stable, he was sure, if they could *see* the gods they worshiped. So he set up two golden calves, one at each extreme border of the nation. And to these two centers of worship he invited all his people to resort. "It is too much for you," he said sympathizing with their natural inclination to idol worship, "to go so far as to Jerusalem; behold your gods right in your midst" (I Kings 12:25-33).

Needless to say, the new system took hold, and Jeroboam thus set the pattern for years to come. The nation that God Almighty had founded had turned away from Him. And from that day to the end of their history, the land was full of gross idolatry. Not that all the people of the Northern Kingdom refused to serve Jehovah, but the rulers from Jeroboam on led the people into one form or another of idolatry, and idolatry was the state religion.

... and Others

Among the promoters of idol worship in Israel were Ahab and Jezebel. Not only did they set up idol worship, but they persecuted the sons of the prophets of God. Under them it was not even safe to try worshiping the true God—though some did, heroically.

It was just at this time that God sent two very great prophets to Israel to try to influence the people to once again give allegiance to the God of Moses and Jacob and Abraham. This is a characteristic of God in all ages—He is long-suffering beyond our power to understand. Israel had openly and outrightly forsaken Him, disowned Him, and done intentional harm to His name among their own people and others. Yet He gave them one more chance.

The two prophets of God at this time were first Elijah, then his successor Elisha. Both did their best, with the help of God, to convince the people. They even used elaborate demonstrations of divine power in an effort to re-establish faith in the God of their fathers. The prophet Elijah, following a God-imposed three-year drought, enacted one of the most impressive dramas recorded in Sacred History (see I Kings 17), bringing down fire from heaven and proving that "the Lord, He is God, the Lord He is God," and convincing many thousands of Israelites. But the impressions were apparently short-lived, and Israel went on in her idolatry.

But we should not say their efforts failed alto-

gether. They were men of God, appointed for a specific mission. If only a handful awoke and took heed, the effort was not lost, for God never expected the whole nation to reform.

The people in general preferred to be led astray by their rulers in the easy ways of idol worship. At times there were some dramatic reformations. But none lasted long, and the people soon lapsed once again into idolatry.

One pause in the long sad story of the decline of the Northern Kingdom is found in the story of Jehu (II Kings 9, 10). He dealt drastically with the worshipers of Baal, and tried his best to put a final stop to all Baal worship during his twenty-eight-year rule. But his son Jehoahaz continued the sin of calf worship, and led the people once more into the downward path.

Under Jeroboam the Second, the Northern Kingdom attained much outward prosperity, but its spiritual life did not improve at all. Men were greedy of gain, and worldliness and sin of gross description prevailed. It was during this time that God sent other prophets, such as Amos, to bear witness against the sins of the rulers and the people. Read some of Amos' words (the entire book was a warning against the apostate people of Israel) and try to realize how earnestly this faithful servant of God pleaded with the men of Israel to return to the worship of the God of their fathers. We can be sure that he himself was a living testimony of faith in God.

But it was all in vain. Israel was joined to his idols and could not be parted.

Another prophet of God arose about this time—Hosea. Like Amos, he did his best to win Israel back from their apostasy. He has been called the pleading prophet, so earnest were his entreaties and so touching his tenderness. Yet all was in vain, for the nation at large. No doubt a few listened and served God, but Israel as a nation would have none of them.

Captivity

At last the long-suffering of God reached its limit, and God gave the Northern Kingdom over into the hands of its enemies, and its people were marched off into captivity. Hoshea was the last of the kings of Israel, and during his rule the King of Assyria captured Samaria (the capital city of Israel), and led the people away.

Why such a catastrophe? Why were the people forced to leave the good land God had given them? The sacred chronicler tells us:

“For so it was, that the children of Israel had sinned against the Lord their God, which had

brought them up out of the land of Egypt, from under the hand of Pharaoh king of Egypt, and feared other gods, and walked in the statutes of the heathen, whom the Lord cast out from before the children of Israel, and of the kings of Israel, which they had made.

“And the children of Israel did secretly those things that were not right against the Lord their God, and they built them high places in all their cities [centers of idol worship], from the tower of the watchmen to the fenced city. And they set them up images and groves in every high hill, and under every green tree: and there they burnt incense in all the high places, as did the heathen whom the Lord carried away from before them; and wrought wicked things to provoke the Lord to anger: for they served idols, whereof the Lord had said unto them, Ye shall not do this thing.”

It was the high price of disobedience. The Lord had given them ample opportunity to see their error and repent. He had “testified against Israel, and against Judah, by all the prophets, and by all the seers, saying, Turn ye from your evil ways, and keep my commandments and my statutes, according to all the law which I commanded your fathers, and which I sent to you by my servants the prophets.” But the people would not listen. “Notwithstanding they would not hear, but hardened their necks, like to the neck of their fathers, that did not believe in the Lord their God. And they rejected his statutes, and his covenant that he made with their fathers, and his testimonies which he testified against them; and they followed vanity, and became vain, and went after the heathen that were round about them, concerning whom the Lord had charged them, that they should not do like them” (II Kings 17:1-15).

What was the result? “The Lord rejected all the seed of Israel, and afflicted them, and delivered them into the hand of spoilers, until he had cast them out of his sight. For he rent Israel from the house of David; . . . for the children of Israel walked in all the sins of Jeroboam which he did; they departed not from them; until the Lord removed Israel out of his sight, as he had said by all his servants and prophets. So was Israel carried away . . . to Assyria” (II Kings 17:20-23).

All was the result of their sin. Again the lesson is for us. God means just what He says. What He predicts *will* come to pass. Just so will our sins and iniquities stand against us and bring upon us the judgments of God, if we do not turn to Him in true repentance. God is silent now, but the wages of sin *will* be meted out. God is always true to His Word. ●●

Give Attendance to . . . Doctrine

(Continued from page 7)

is futile—indeed, impossible, for “faith without works is dead.” If we would be identified as Christians we must live and act like men who belong to Christ. Jesus promised to bless only those who *do* His commandments. Again He said, “If ye know these things, happy are ye if ye do them” (John 13:17). If ye *do* them—the verb indicates action.

However, no moral requirement, be it ever so important, can stand alone. Every law of God stems from a basic doctrine, teaching or principle. There must be thought; there must be motivation; there must be decision. Noble living is rooted in high doctrine. *Great conduct is the expression of great belief.*

Men may maintain that doctrine isn't important; that creeds divide and that strong beliefs are a hindrance to the Christian spirit. But God says the opposite; and we are interested in what God says.

Knowledge must always precede belief in religion the same as in any other area of human endeavor, for a person cannot intelligently believe that of which he has not been previously informed. Likewise knowledge always comes first on God's program of training. Right knowledge is the basis for every right action. Says the apostle Peter, “All things that pertain unto life and godliness” come “through the knowledge of him that hath called us to glory and virtue” (II Pet. 1:3). Even in Peter's day this principle was of long standing. Almost a millennium earlier the wise author of the book of Proverbs had written: “Wisdom is the principle thing; therefore get wisdom: and with all thy getting get understanding” (Prov. 4:7).

Knowledge—right knowledge—is essential to faith; and faith is indispensable, for “Without faith it is impossible to please him” (Heb. 11:6).

Study, . . . Search

And knowledge does not come without effort. Paul instructed Timothy to study: “Study to show thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth” (II Tim. 2:15). *Study* is necessary, and *work*—neither term implies a bland acceptance of whatever one is handed. Timothy had Paul to instruct him, and from childhood he had been taught in the Scriptures; yet he was to “study.” The Word of God must be rightly divided, and it is the duty of every one of us to be able to do this.

Searching the Scriptures, building faith, absorbing ourselves mentally in what we read is work, real work, which we would naturally shun. But Jesus said, “Ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free.” And how else can we expect to “know the truth” if not by settling our minds into it and learning it!

Have we wondered if God might perhaps make an exception of us for what we did not know, due to our individual difficulty in applying ourselves to learning? Not so. God has done much in our behalf to make the knowledge available to us, and we shall prove ourselves most ungrateful if we are unwilling to apply ourselves and learn it. He will judge us for what we do not know, as well as for what we fail to do. Ignorance is no exception to His law; for it results either from careless neglect or sheer human obstinacy. And both are wrong.

We need to take a lesson from the noble Bereans. We read of them in Acts 17:11, “These were more noble than those in Thessalonica, in that they received the word with all readiness of mind, and searched the scriptures daily, whether those things were so.” Here is an example of open-mindedness, guided by a reliable standard of judgment, the Scriptures. The Bereans listened to Paul both with an open mind and an active intelligence. Then they compared what he had told them with what they could read in the Scriptures and were convinced that Paul's message was consistent with the message of God which had come down through the ages. And so they accepted it.

This is the same process Paul advised his brethren in Thessalonica to follow: “Never despise what is spoken in the name of the Lord. By all means use your judgment, and hold on to whatever is really good. Steer clear of evil in any form” (I Thess. 5:19, 22, Phillips). Or, in the simpler language of our common version: “Prove all things; hold fast that which is good.”

There is another very good reason why this thorough investigation and study is necessary: because we are responsible for being able to answer those who question us concerning our faith. The apostle Peter states it this way: “Be ready always to give an answer to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you with meekness and fear” (I Pet. 3:15). We have a hope. There is a reason why we have this hope, and we must be always ready to defend it. We must be ready to “earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints” (Jude 3). A hesitating, faltering answer will never win the confidence of our inquirer or defeat the doubts that rise within our own minds. We must be ready always with a

firm "it is written" and "earnestly contend" for our faith. It is the Lord's command.

The Practical Value of Doctrine

There are several very practical benefits we may obtain from a thorough knowledge of our doctrine. First of all, our beliefs provide material upon which we may exercise our powers of thought—which God wants us to do. "Think on these things," is the command (Phil. 4:8), and "these things" must be true, honest, just, pure, lovely, and of good report. Very little of the knowledge of our world meets this exacting standard. But sound doctrine always will, for it comes from God Himself. As Jesus said, "My doctrine is not mine, but his that sent me" (John 7:16). We may freely and safely exercise our minds in the various cardinal points of our faith without any fear of our thoughts being on dangerous ground. And such thoughts will at the same time be building us up in our most holy faith.

There are practical matters which must be given thought also, and not be neglected. But our mind is so constructed that it is always active in *something*, and it is our Christian duty to keep that something of the highest quality possible. Anything less will count only as vain imaginations, earthly things, pettiness and sin.

A second benefit of our doctrine is incentive. Noble conduct must have noble motivation, and noble motivation comes from a firm conviction that what God offers is worth the effort. He has offered us "exceeding great and precious promises: that by these [we] might be partakers of the divine nature" (II Pet. 1:4). Goodness might for a time satisfy us with its own rewards, for we will find that we are happier even now by showing a kindly disposition, by doing our share of the work, by being honest and trustworthy and maintaining a spirit of good cheer and cooperation. But the novelty soon wears off. And no power short of an unshakable confidence in God and what He has promised, nothing less than the supreme goal of life eternal in the world to come, will be sufficient to impel us to cover every step of the narrow way to life, or to make a complete surrender of ourselves. Genuine Christian character—the kind that will endure to the end of the day of salvation and on through the cycles of eternity—has but one source of power: God, and what He has offered.

We may not often stop to think about it, but there is practical value in nearly every tenet of our faith. It is built into its very structure. Since we have no immortal soul, our only chance for future life depends on doing what God says we must do,

so that we may have extended life; for who wants to cease to exist forever? If we really believe that we ourselves are our own tempters and the source of our own evil, we know where to begin our conquest of ourselves. And if we believe Jesus is coming back to set up His kingdom, we will be spending our time getting ready. There is no point of doctrine but has its practical implications. Indeed, our doctrine is our strongest stimulus to real Christian effort day in and day out.

Someone has compared our faith with a multi-storied building. First there is the foundation, which is the Word of God. Then there is the superstructure of steel beams and girders, securely fastened to the massive concrete foundation. These beams and girders are the various points of sound doctrine. Then there is the finishing work, which forms the walls and floors of the rooms within the building.

To say that doctrine is not so important is like saying that the beams and girders are really not essential to the ten-story building—an obvious fallacy. Every part is essential to the whole.

Doctrine—The Basis of Conviction

Paul expressed a divine requirement when he said: "Let every man be fully persuaded in his own mind" (Rom. 14:5). No yes-men, no unthinking imitators. Every man must be genuinely convinced, fully persuaded in his own mind.

Jesus stressed this point of conviction in the parable of the Sower, and the four types of soil. Some seed fell upon a rock: "And as soon as it was sprung up, it withered away, because it lacked moisture." This illustrates those who, when they hear the Word of God, "receive the word with joy; and these have no root, which for a while believe, and in time of temptation fall away" (Luke 8:6, 13). They lack the element of sound doctrine and conviction, hence do not have the nurture to feed their faith and keep themselves alive and growing through tribulation.

In contrast to Jesus' illustration of the soil lacking depth so that the plant was unable to produce fruit, is Jeremiah's illustration of the "tree planted by the waters, that sends out its roots to the stream; and is not afraid when heat comes, nor is anxious in a year of drought, for it ceases not to bear fruit" (Jer. 17:7-8, American Translation). Let us be such a fruit-bearing tree.

Knowledge must precede conviction, and conviction must precede action. We might do part of the work without conviction; we might outwardly conform to the principles of the Way, and adapt our lives to the pattern others have set—outwardly.

But if we lack the depth of sound doctrine and conviction, we shall lack the strength to go the whole way and make the full surrender.

God never wanted His people blandly coming and going, swallowing anything they were handed and calling it good whether they meant it or not. The prophet Ezekiel described this kind in his day, that "come unto thee as the people cometh, and they sit before thee as my people, and they hear thy words"—but there is no depth of impression; "they hear thy words, but they will not do them: for with their mouth they show much love, but their heart goeth after their covetousness. And, lo, thou art unto them as a very lovely song of one that hath a pleasant voice, and can play well on an instrument: for they hear thy words, but they do them not" (Ezek. 33:31-32). They heard; but there was no depth, no conviction, no persuasion; hence no action.

Jesus' apostles were a striking example of conviction. They had to be convinced, for they left all to follow Christ. Peter spoke from conviction when in answer to Jesus' question: "Whom say ye that I the Son of man am," he replied: "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the Living God." Had he maintained this conviction, he would not have fallen in temptation the night Jesus was betrayed. But after the resurrection he, with the other apostles, rebounded in fullest faith and conviction, deepened in the years of faithful service that followed. In those days, believing in Christ meant literally suffering for His sake, and what could sustain a man or woman through severe persecution except a strong and unshakable conviction that "the Word of the Lord is right," and that His promise would far outlast all the people who thought to do them harm? It was a test of "everything, Lord, for Thee"—with no exceptions or reservations. So committed were they that one of their number could write: "For none of us liveth to himself, and no man dieth to himself. For whether we live, we live unto the Lord, and whether we die, we die unto the Lord: whether we live therefore, or die, we are the Lord's (Rom. 14:7-8).

So impelling was their conviction that these apostles could not keep silent. "We cannot but speak the things which we have seen and heard," they said. Nothing naive or vacillating about this kind of defense—their conviction at this point was invincible. "We having the same spirit of faith," wrote Paul, "according as it is written, I believed, and therefore have I spoken; we also believe, and therefore speak" (II Cor. 4:13).

Though we do not face the persecution they had, our conviction today must be just as stalwart and

just as unshakable. We must know absolutely and positively that what we believe is true, that our work is of God, and that it will prosper as He prospers it. Never will God forsake the plan He has begun. "Hath he said, and shall he not do it? or hath he spoken, and shall he not make it good?" (Num. 23:19).

We can be certain that every promise will be abundantly fulfilled and every word will be confirmed. And every sacrifice we have made in His cause will be recompensed a thousandfold in the glorious age to come!

Our Concern—Our Attitude

What is our attitude toward these things? How strong is our conviction? How do we feel toward the priceless treasure of divine truth we are privileged to hold within our grasp? Do we realize that we are possessors of heavenly riches? Do we realize the intrinsic value of what these riches may be worth to us in the ages to come?

It is so easy in the midst of ordinary days and ordinary tasks to think that everything about our lives is ordinary. But there is nothing ordinary. Everything we have is of God; it is ours in sacred trust, to be used as God ordains. Do we prize our treasures as we ought?

Suppose we had a creed we could not defend by the Word of God. Suppose we were constantly coming upon passages of Scripture which directly contradicted some tenet of our faith. What would we think then? How much would we feel like investing in such a doctrine? What would we think of the God behind it, if that were the best He could give us to build upon?

But no, thank God, our doctrine is sound. It is a treasure, a priceless treasure. It is all one divine harmony, one grand plan of salvation. When we think about its value, how can we let it become so commonplace that we no longer have a warm, glowing interest in its truths? How can we sing halfheartedly and pray absent-mindedly when God has entrusted such treasures of wisdom and knowledge to our keeping?

Let us realize also the responsibility that comes with this knowledge. Can we think for a moment that God—who has invested so much in making this knowledge available to us—can we think that He will let us take it or leave it at our caprice? Is He not just in holding us accountable for what we know?

In Titus 2:10 Paul says that Christians ought to "adorn" the doctrine of God. Doctrine, to Paul was always practical, and he pictured it as need-

(Continued on page 26)



Out of the Archives

The Epistle of Barnabas

Writing among the early Christians began with the apostles, whose works have been preserved for us in the New Testament. But the apostles were not the only believers who wrote. The centuries immediately following Christ were prolific with writings. Many were in the form of letters. Because brethren were often separated by persecution, and churches were widely scattered, earnest believers communicated with one another by letter, much as we do today, to help and encourage each other in the faith.

Some of these letters have come down to our day. We cannot accept their words as Scripture, for the text has not been preserved free from corruption, not being part of the Canon which God protected. Nor can we be sure of the faith and loyalty of the authors. Nevertheless, some of these letters reflect the intense faith of the early Church and the deeper thinking which the teachings of Jesus and His apostles inspired. Many thoughts contained in these letters are harmonious with Scripture and can serve to stimulate us today, just as they did the believers who read them centuries ago.

The following is from an edited translation of a letter by an unknown "Barnabas," probably written near the end of the first century.

THERE are two ways of doctrine and authority, the one of light, and the other of darkness. But there is a great difference between these two ways.

The Way of Light

The way of light, then, is as follows. If any one desires to travel to the appointed place, he must be zealous in his works. The knowledge, therefore,

which is given to us for the purpose of walking in this way, is the following. Thou shalt love Him that created thee: thou shalt glorify Him that redeemed thee from death. Thou shalt be simple in heart, and rich in spirit. Thou shalt not join thyself to those who walk in the way of death. Thou shalt hate doing what is displeasing to God: thou shalt hate all hypocrisy. Thou shalt not forsake the commandments of the Lord. Thou shalt not exalt thyself, but shalt be of a lowly mind. Thou shalt not take glory to thyself. Thou shalt not take evil counsel against thy neighbour. Thou shalt not allow over-boldness to enter into thy soul. Thou shalt not commit fornication: thou shalt not commit adultery: thou shalt not be a corrupter of youth.

Thou shalt not let the word of God issue from thy lips with any kind of impurity. Thou shalt not [respect] persons when thou reprovest any one for transgression. Thou shalt be meek: thou shalt be peaceable. Thou shalt tremble at the words which thou hearest. Thou shalt not be mindful of evil against thy brother. Thou shalt not be of doubtful mind as to whether a thing shall be or not. Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord in vain.

Thou shalt not covet what is thy neighbour's, nor shalt thou be avaricious. Thou shalt not be joined in soul with the haughty, but thou shalt be reckoned with the righteous and lowly.

Receive thou as good things the trials which come upon thee. Thou shalt not be of double mind or of double tongue, for a double tongue is a snare of death.

Thou shalt not issue orders with bitterness to thy maid-servant or thy man-servant, who trust in the same God, lest thou shouldest not reverence that God who is above both; for He calls men not according to their outward appearance, but according as the Spirit has prepared them.

Thou shalt not be hasty with thy tongue, for the mouth is a snare of death. As far as possible, thou shalt be pure in thy soul. Do not be ready to stretch forth thy hands to take, whilst thou contractest them to give. Thou shalt love, as the apple of thine eye, every one that speaketh to thee the word of the Lord.

Thou shalt remember the day of Judgment, night and day. Thou shalt judge righteously. Thou shalt not make a schism, but thou shalt pacify those that contend by bringing them together. Thou shalt not go to prayer with an evil conscience. This is the way of light.

The Way of Darkness

But the way of darkness is crooked, and full of cursing; for it is the way of eternal death and pun-

ishment, in which way are the things that destroy the soul, viz., idolatry, over-confidence, the arrogance of power, hypocrisy, double-heartedness, adultery, murder, rapine, haughtiness, transgression, deceit, malice, self-sufficiency, poisoning, magic, avarice, want of the fear of God. In this way, too, are those who persecute the good, those who hate truth, those who love falsehood, those who know not the reward of righteousness, those who cleave not to that which is good, those who attend not with just judgment, those who watch not to fear God but incline to wickedness, from whom meekness and patience are far off; persons who love vanity, follow after a reward, pity not the needy, labour not in aid of him who is overcome with toil; who are prone to evil-speaking, who know not Him that made them, destroyers of the workmanship of God; who turn away him that is in want, . . . and who are in every respect transgressors.

Conclusion

It is well, therefore, that he who has learned the judgments of the Lord, as many as have been written, should walk in them. For he who keepeth these shall be glorified in the kingdom of God; but he who chooseth other things shall be destroyed with his works. On this account there will be a resurrection, on this account a retribution.

The day is at hand in which all [evil] things shall perish. The Lord is near, and His reward. Again, and yet again, I beseech you: be good law-givers to one another; continue faithful counsellors of one another; take away from among you all hypocrisy. And may God, who ruleth over all the world, give to you wisdom, intelligence, understanding, knowledge of His judgments, with patience. And be ye taught of God, inquiring diligently what the Lord asks from you; and do it that ye may be safe in the Day of Judgment. And if you have any remembrance of what is good, be mindful of me, meditating on these things, in order that both my desire and watchfulness may result in some good. While yet you are in this vessel, do not fail in any one of those things, but unceasingly seek after them, and fulfill every commandment; for these things are worthy. Wherefore I have been the more earnest to write to you, as my ability served, that I might cheer you. The Lord of glory and of all grace be with your spirit. ●●

The emptier the pot, the quicker it boils—watch your temper.

January, 1977

From Parent to Parent—

Take Time

*Take time to be holy,
The world rushes on;
Spend much time in secret,
With Jesus alone.*

JOANNE was singing softly to herself as she prepared supper. This was one of those rare times when she was completely alone and unhampered in the kitchen. The older children were outdoors, the younger ones were napping late.

*By looking to Jesus,
Like Him thou shalt be . . .*

Suddenly she paused. "Like Him thou shalt be." Just thinking of the words of the song made her feel such a strong desire to be like Him. "If only I could feel this way all the time," she thought. "It's easy now, with the house so quiet, and plenty of time to get supper on the table. But the world rushes on, and before I know it I'm caught in the rush of breakfast, getting children off to school, morning chores, errands, washing, ironing—not to mention the innumerable interruptions, mostly from the children. It seems they're always needing attention, not only for their physical needs, but their character training as well.

"Oh, it's so easy to get all wrapped up in the events of day-to-day living, to spend hour after hour thinking only of the tasks that lie at hand, already planning before one day is over what I would like to accomplish on the next. If only I had more time to myself, like now. I'd feel so much calmer and better able to meet all the demands on my time. To be able to *feel* and *live* the sentiment expressed in the song, even during the most hectic, trying hours . . ."

*Take time to be holy,
Be calm in thy soul,
Each thought and each motive
Beneath His control.*

"Yes," Joanne thought, "I feel this way now. But will it, *can* it last?"

She sang on.

"Take time to be holy." What was this song really saying? How many times had she sung it and missed this vital point?

"Take time to be holy," Joanne said aloud. "Take time. TAKE TIME," she repeated.

"Of course," she said, as she retrieved a spoon that had clattered to the floor, rinsed it, and rapidly stirred the vegetables on the stove.

"I can't let these moments come along by happenstance. I need them too much, in order to be a better mother, a better wife, a better Christian."

Joanne sat down, deep in thought. "How can I do this? How can I get more moments to myself, for my spiritual refreshment? *Take time*. It really wouldn't have to be a lot of time all at once. Maybe five minutes here, or ten minutes there. Hmmm. With more effort, I could fit in even a few minutes of Bible reading and meditation during the course of the morning's chores. There is a lull now and then in the immediate press of things.

"And in the afternoon—yes, definitely, after the little ones are put to bed I usually feel the need of a break myself. Why not take the time then to read something upbuilding, or to page through the hymn-books and sing some of my favorite songs?"

This would mean, she knew, resisting the temptation to pick up the newspaper or some lighter reading material instead. But she felt determined. It would be worth it.

"I'm sure I'll be more patient through the day's petty vexations."

She stood up with resolve. Yes, and what could stop her from talking to God *any time* of the day? Even a thought sent heavenward was bound to be helpful.

Joanne was sure she would think of more ways to take time to be holy as she practiced it daily.

*Take time to be holy,
Speak oft with thy Lord;
Abide in Him always,
And feed on His Word;
Make friends...*

Her reverie was cut off by the children's noisy arrival from outdoors. She greeted them happily. "Come in! Supper's almost ready." ●●

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Our Readers Write...

Examples

We would do well to read and study the examples of old. But most of all we must make examples of right living in our own everyday lives, examples that we would not be ashamed for others to pattern after. Let us strive to live so that if everybody lived like us the world would be a better place to live.

Kinards, South Carolina

Mrs. H. C.

Take Heed

The words of our Master point to us that Christ's return is very near. We need to make the very most of the few remaining days of our probation.

But too often we who are scattered abroad do not take in the great importance of making the very most of these evil days before the great Day comes. And if we do not, that Day will surely come as a thief in the night.

Our Father in heaven has been very kind to us to help us put forth more effort to keep pressing ahead towards the mark for the great prize.

Vernon, British Columbia, Canada

A. S.

In The Presence of God

When our Handbook tells me that God is, and that there is none else like Him, and that He is a "rewarder of them that diligently seek Him," and that without faith it is impossible to please Him, then it behooves me to draw near unto Him with a true heart that I may be fortified in the hour of weakness or temptation.

Absolute honesty before both God and man is a priceless virtue; and as I strive to bring myself into compliance with His mandates, I see flaws which were incurred by life's habits, and which I find to be slowly diminishing. This among many other points I owe to the Megiddo Church in revealing the plain facts of God's Word and instilling in me a desire to improve myself and mortify the call of the flesh.

I want to say with Jeremiah, "Thy words were found, and I did eat them; and thy word was unto me the joy and rejoicing of mine heart: for I am called by thy name. O Lord God of hosts" (Jer. 15:16).

Thermopolis, Wyoming

J. A.

Really Thirsty

We had in a sermon recently that we must hunger and thirst after righteousness (Matt. 5:6). The point was made that thirst is the strongest of all impulses, and how true this is. When I was in the hospital last year they gave me liquids intravenously for five days. During that five days I had nothing to eat or drink, and after a time I reached the point that about all I could think about was a drink of cool water. I would even dream about it. This is the way we must become spiritually, so taken up with the spiritual things that everything we think, say or do will be to the glory of God.

Athens, Tennessee

S. K.



SCRIPTURAL SPOTLIGHT

*"The meek will he guide in judgment: and the meek will
he teach his way"*
—(Psalm 25:9).

WHAT comforting words are these of David's psalm. No matter how self-confident we feel at times, we always arrive at a place where we long for guidance.

David was in distress because of his enemies. But deeper than this was his sense of sin which permeates this entire psalm. David is here lifting his soul to God.

We are not hunted by enemies, as David was; but we today sometimes find ourselves surrounded by distressing circumstances seemingly insurmountable. And we too have sinned. Like David, may we have a deep realizing sense of our sin and may we know our dependency upon God.

David prayed, "Good and upright is the Lord: therefore will he teach [penitent] sinners in the way. The meek will he guide in judgment: and the meek will he teach his way. All the paths of the Lord are mercy and truth unto such as keep his covenant and his testimonies" (Ps. 25:8-10).

David knew that God was merciful and just. He knew God will guide, but he knew also that we have a duty to fulfill. David knew from his own experience that God teaches and guides only the meek. He knew, as well as we know when we are proud and following our own inclinations, that then God is afar off.

What is there about this virtue of meekness which God desires so highly and demands of us? It is that the meek are eager to listen to God. The meek are willing and glad to be corrected. The meek manifest the godly virtues of patience, forbearance and quietness. The meek abound in goodwill. They are not easily provoked or irritated, but are forbearing under injury or annoyance. The meek exalt God and esteem others. Meekness involves self-control; it is not a weak but a heroic quality. Meekness is irresistibly attractive.

Pride, on the other hand, is an ugly trait. Pride

loves itself. It overvalues self and undervalues others. Like a magnet, pride continually seeks to draw all attention and credit to itself. It seems totally unaware that it also has repelling power which keeps it apart from all true happiness and joy.

The proud fool feels superior and will not allow himself to be corrected. The heart is the seat of pride. If it is not there, it will not be in the looks, the speech, or the dress. One man has pride in his rags, and another in his fine-spun garments. Of all things there is perhaps nothing that angels behold with such astonishment as a proud man.

Think of the beautiful things the Bible tells about the meek. "God lifteth up the meek" (Ps. 147:6). "The meek shall have increasing joy in the Lord" (Isa. 29:19, Berkeley). God "will beautify the meek with salvation" (Ps. 149:4). The meek and lowly shall be exalted (Ezek. 21:26). God will arise to "save all the meek of the earth" (Ps. 76:9). "Blessed are the meek: for they shall inherit the earth" (Matt. 5:5).

What an inestimable boon is held out to God's meek!

But what about those who think too highly of themselves? We naturally think too highly of ourselves. Pride is often overlooked as a sin—it even makes us look good to ourselves! But it is an offense to God. The proud are "an abomination to the Lord" (Prov. 16:5). "God resisteth the proud" (James 4:6). God knows the proud "afar off"—that is, He keeps them at a distance (Ps. 138:6). The proud "shall be brought low" (Isa. 2:12). Their road leads to destruction (Prov. 16:18).

May we take it to heart.

The good and just Lord has enlightened us. He will guide and teach the meek. In the end they shall enjoy the priceless boon of everlasting life.

(Continued on page 27)

Pro & Con

A Column for Open Discussion

All our readers do not agree with us. If you are among those who differ on some point, write us your views and we will publish them, together with Scriptural comment. Our policy is the Apostle's injunction: "Prove all things; hold fast that which is good."

THIS is in answer to your recent booklet I received (*Read for Your Life*). It seemed correct at first reading, but as I searched to see according to God's Word, I found it has many errors.

"Yes, we all have to answer for our deeds, we are judged by our fruits. But Adam sinned, and we lost our 'perfection' because of him."

(Note: Where does the Bible say that because Adam sinned we all lost our perfection? This unreasonable doctrine has caused more people to reject the Bible than any other. The Bible does not teach Adamic condemnation. Believers in this false theory create contradictions. Ezekiel plainly states God's principle: "The soul that sinneth, it shall die. The son shall not bear the iniquity of the father, neither shall the father bear the iniquity of the son: the righteousness of the righteous shall be upon him, and the wickedness of the wicked shall be upon him" —Ezekiel 18:20. —EDITOR.)

"We are to obey commandments, but Christ died for the just and unjust, and He chose to do so, whether we think it's fair to Him or not. Why do we question? It does not have its origin in paganism. God sent His only son to die, and it had to be right!"

(Note: We cannot find the phrase that "God sent his only son to die" in the Bible. Nor can we find that Christ "chose" to die. He was murdered, according to Stephen (Acts 7:52), and what man ever "chose" to be murdered? The idea of sacrificial atonement is part of popular theology, but it is not Scripture. The pagans believed and practiced human sacrifice, but God never allowed it.

You are right when you say we must obey the commandments of God. But it is only confusing to say we must obey the commandments and then to say Christ's literal death atoned for our sins. It is either one way or the other.

When the religious world read of Christ's death, all they can think of is a sacrifice for their sins. But Jesus did not say once that He was going to sacrifice His life to take away the punishment for sin. He spent His lifetime doing the will of the Father (John 4:34), and in submitting to physical

death, He was completing a life of perfect obedience and submission; He was completing the self-sacrifice of His own wishes and ways, which every believer in Him must also complete. See Rom. 6:6-10; 1 Pet. 2:21; Ps. 40:7-8. —EDITOR.)

"Be specific. This booklet is so poorly written and will mislead any who read it!"

(Note: The booklet may be poorly written, but we believe it presents the true teaching of the Bible. —EDITOR.)

"The Bible says that to sin against the Holy Spirit is unforgivable, and you in the booklet completely deny any such power."

(Note: In the days of the apostles, when God's people possessed the Holy Spirit power, sinning against the Holy Spirit was a serious matter—it was the sin of apostasy, and was unforgivable. See Hebrews 6:4-6. It was the sin of those who had "tasted the good word of God, and the powers of the world to come"—if they should "fall away," they could not be restored and forgiven. But today no one has that power; hence, no one can sin against the Holy Spirit today. Any sin, if repented of, turned from and forsaken, can be forgiven today. Thank God! It would be frightening to think we could commit a sin which could not be forgiven. —EDITOR.)

Give Attendance to ... Doctrine

(Continued from page 21)

ing a "becoming" or "fitting" adornment, which is godly living. God loves beauty, not exterior beauty, but inner beauty, the "beauty of holiness."

False doctrine always brings a harvest of evil; truth results in righteousness.

John, in his Second Epistle uses "truth" and "doctrine" as key words. True doctrine, he says, includes believing that Jesus Christ came in the flesh. All else is anti-Christ. The mark of sound doctrine is abiding in and walking in the truth. The Bible is a Book to be believed; after that, it is a book to be obeyed.

Let us seize our opportunity with all the earnestness within us. Let us apply ourselves totally to it—heart, soul, mind and strength; be persuaded and confess, "It is the truth." Then let us make it our own by setting it up to monitor our every thought and word and feeling in our daily lives, that it may be said of us: "God be thanked ... Ye have obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine which was delivered you." ●●

Making Life Heroic

We must use every moment of our time here working for our Father in heaven. God puts us among these scenes, these people, these opportunities, these duties. He is neither absent-minded nor incompetent. This is exactly the place he means me to be in, the place I am capable of filling. We have no reason to sit down in idleness.

If we go through life timidly, weakly, ineffectively, the fault is neither with our endowment nor our environment. It is with ourselves. It is we that are not competent for life, we that are lazy, cowardly, idle. When one sets himself to live a grand life, man cannot interrupt him, and God will not. As for our opportunities, we can make a heroic life out of whatever is set before us to work upon.

Which of us can sit down at the close of a day and say, Today I have done all that was in my power to do for God and righteousness? But it seems that we look for large things, and forget that which is close at hand. To take life as God gives it, not as we want it, and then make the best of it, is the hard lesson that life puts before us to learn. God gives us strength and sense enough for everything He wants us to do.

But we must let go of self-seeking. In the eternal life there is no greed; one will neither hear "mine" nor "thine"; all things will be for the good of all. The richest experiences of life never come to those who try to win them selfishly. But all blessings are in the way of him who, forgetful of self, tries to be helpful to the world and who spends his life in loving, upright deeds.

A strong thinker once said, "No one knocks at my door who is not sent by God."

We are spending time well when we are paying it out to God, to buy the things He means our lives to own, whether He is putting before us a duty to be done, a friend to be won, a small service to be rendered. How do we know that the interruption that we snarl at is not the most blessed thing that has come to us in a long time!

—Mr. K. M., Utah

Scriptural Spotlight

(Continued from page 25)


The proud God knows only afar off. If they do not lift up their souls to Him in meekness, they are doomed for destruction.

O Lord, help me to seek Thy meekness with all my heart, and forge it into my character, that it may be mine forever. ••

January, 1977

Those Words!!

Take Heed


"The boneless tongue, so small and weak,
Can crush and kill," declares the Greek.
"The tongue destroys a greater hoard,"
The Turk asserts, "than does the sword."

A Persian proverb wisely saith,
"A lengthy tongue—an early death";
Or sometimes takes this form instead,
"Don't let your tongue cut off your head."

"The tongue can speak a word whose speed,"
The Chinese say, "outstrips the steed";
While Arab sages this impart,
"The tongue's great storehouse is the heart."

From Hebrew wit this maxim sprung,
"Though feet should slip, ne'er let the tongue";
The sacred writer crowns the whole:
"Who keeps his tongue doth keep his soul!"

—Selected.

Weigh Your Words Carefully

Words may be our most helpful friends or our most destructive enemies.

Some words are blunt and bruise the sensibilities of those who must bear them.

Some words are sharp and cut to the quick.

Some words are slithery and snake their way into the bloodstream of another, where they may deposit their deadly venom.

Some words are like gentle showers on young spring plants, refreshing, healthful and encouraging.

Some words are like a burst of sunshine on a dark day.

Some words are like seeds which, planted in good soil, germinate and grow to great influence.

Some words are like stars in the night—the darker the night, the brighter they shine.

What about your words? What might someone else say your words are like?

Lord, we left all—the nets, and boat and fish,
Left many a cherished plan and eager wish;
When morning breeze was filling all the sails
We turned to bear a cross and climb these trails;
For when we heard Thee calling from the shore
We rose to follow Thee for evermore;
What compensation shall we have for this
Forsaking all of earthly joy and bliss?

The Hundred Fold -- Plus

“Dear Child—I always pay a hundredfold!
Not just in shining silver coin and gold,
In treasures that will fill the heart today
And then tomorrow, rust and pass away;
Ah, ye that have gone forth and left that ship
And loving, follow Me—no purse, no scrip—
The value of my coinage is so great
Men know not how to find its aggregate!”

A hundredfold? Ten times ten thousand ways,
I know it, Lord! Thy service pays and pays
And pays—until this heart cannot contain
The joy and all the wealth of heav’nly gain;
And if I reach the grand, eternal shore
And rise to share Thy glory evermore,
So far beyond my highest dream or wish,
What then will matter—nets, and boat, and fish!

—Selected.

