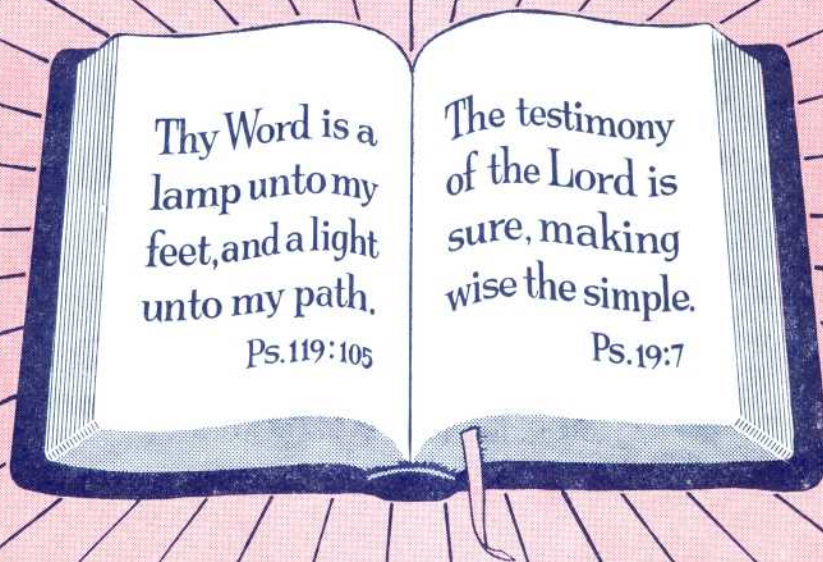


# Megiddo Message

DEVOTED TO THE CAUSE OF CHRIST



**Begotten of God by Faith**

**Is She Really Dead?**

**Depth**

**Devils Within**



# Megiddo Message

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OFFICIAL ORGAN OF  
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L. T. NICHOLS, *Founder*  
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A religious magazine, devoted to the cause of Christ and published for the dissemination of Bible truth alone.

The MEGIDDO MESSAGE will

- Strengthen your faith in the Bible
- Answer perplexing religious questions
- Give you courage for these uncertain times
- Help you live above the world's moral corruption
- Reveal to you how to develop a character acceptable to God
- Bring peace and stability to your life

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## Editorially Speaking . . .

### Do I Act or React?

AS HUMAN beings we are often found reacting when we should be acting. The way we feel or the way we think concerning another person is too often a reaction rather than an action. If someone snaps at us, our human tendency is to snap right back. If we hear criticism of someone or something, it is also human nature to agree with, or support such criticism even though we don't actually know all the facts. This is because we are reacting to what other people say, think, or feel rather than weighing the evidence rationally and acting on prudent judgment.

We may start the day feeling fine until someone with a negative attitude crosses our path. And what then? Do we remember the words of the psalm, "Great peace have they which love thy law: and nothing shall offend them"? Or do we immediately feel negative and unkind and our whole day is turned inside out? Why should we allow someone else to determine our attitude or decide what kind of day we are going to have? Yet how frequently this happens unless we are strongly fortified with a steadfast purpose.

The secular world realizes this phenomenon of human nature. Several years ago a national magazine published an article on acting versus reacting. The article stressed the positive values of acting pleasantly and continuing on our way even though someone else attempts to stir our wrath.

If non-Christians consider it important to exhibit a positive attitude toward whatever might happen and control their actions, how much more is it necessary for the professing Christian to do so! In the book of Proverbs we read, "He that is soon angry dealeth foolishly." And again, "A soft answer turneth away wrath." Again, "In the multitude of words there wanteth not sin: but he that refraineth his lips is wise." And, "He that keepeth his mouth keepeth his life" (Prov. 14:17; 15:1; 10:19; 13:3).

We recognize, of course, our natural inclination to evil. "The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked" (Jer. 17:9). How natural, then, for our unrestrained emotions to succumb to the temptation to react to someone else's unpleasantness. But shouldn't we, as followers of Christ, prevail against this human tendency and act positively under adverse circumstances?

When the person working next to us, or living near us has a bad attitude, should we consent with it by adopting it? Why should we let others dictate what our actions shall be? We *should* not! We *must* not! It is our sacred duty to display the fruit of the Spirit in every situation—love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, and temperance. Such conduct leaves no place for reactions, but only positive Christian action! ●●

# Begotten of God by Faith

## PRAYER

Dear Heavenly Father, we ascribe praise and honor to Thy holy name that our lives are spared to the present moment, that we are privileged to read Thy wise counsel in Thy Word of truth; and may it make deeper impressions upon our minds, that it may produce in us fruits of righteousness, and cause us to grow in spiritual things. May we kill out the old nature, and become armed with Thy mind, think Thy thoughts, and permit ourselves only such feelings as Thou canst condone.

Help us not to delay to do these important things, but to realize all hope of future life depends upon our doing them. Alert us that the most important thing is to now make our calling and election sure.

We pray for the strength to put away all jealousy, envy, selfishness, covetousness, everything which the carnal mind prompts. Help us to remember our own evil ways, and our doings which have not been good, and now amend our ways and our doings. May we loathe self for each time we were governed by any unholy motives.

May Thy truth crowd out all fleshly feelings, and may our minds be filled with thoughts of the future, the glories to be revealed at the coming of Thy Son.

Father, we appreciate Thy goodness in causing Thy saving knowledge to become our priceless treasure, making it possible for us to be begotten anew, to be born into an entirely new life through the action of Thy quickening Word. Grant that we may make the very most of this kind act on Thy part, and now show vivid signs of spiritual existence, and normal growth into holiness. If we are truly born of Thee we will show the realness of our new life by overcoming the world.

We rejoice that we have the promise of eternal life, even though that life is not now in our possession. It is assuring to know that Thy dear Son has been invested with the authority to dispense that life to all who are worthy of it at Judgment Day. Grant us the spiritual vitality to now take the necessary steps so we will be eligible for the great boon of eternal life when it is dispensed, for Thine is the kingdom, and the glory, and the power forever. Amen.

## DISCOURSE

MEMBERSHIP IN God's holy family has been the desire and prayer of saints and sages from antiquity. To feel—and more, to feel with confident assurance—that one belongs to the infinite, that one is joined to that which is everlasting and omnipotent, is the ultimate goal of all who have sought godlikeness.

This heavenly relationship of earthly beings to the Almighty is the thought that the apostle John is compassing in the words “born of God,” or “begotten of God.” We read in First John 5: “Whosoever believeth that Jesus is the Christ is born of God.” The Greek word for “born” is *gennao*, which may mean either “born” or “begotten.” When we enter the Christian way, we are begotten by the Word of truth, hence are born into a new life.

Begetting must precede birth, therefore to be “born of God” implies that one has been previously “begotten.” How are we begotten of God? James 1: 18 gives us the answer: “Of his own will begat he us with the word of truth, that we should be a kind of firstfruits of his creatures.” Not until we are begotten of God, begotten with His “word of truth,” are we born of God.

The apostle John uses the words “begotten” and “born” interchangeably, as is shown in I John 5: 18: “We know that whosoever is born of God sinneth not; but he that is begotten of God keepeth himself, and that wicked one toucheth him not.” If we are actually begotten or born into that new life of the true Christian, we will keep ourselves unspotted from the world, and neither its wickedness nor the promptings of our own lower natures will be able to cause us to sin.

If truly begotten or born into the new life, all the elements of the old life will be terminated. We will give them no place in our hearts' affections. If living the new life, we shall have given up living like pagans. The pagans lived merely for the gratification of the moment, with no thought of a future, or any feeling of self-restraint for the sake of building a character. They abandoned themselves recklessly to sensuality, with a lust for the business of impurity in every shape and form. To the man

living the new life all this is off-limits. He simply cannot live one moment as he would have lived had not God's saving hope touched his life.

**"Whosoever Believeth..."**

"Whosoever believeth that Jesus is the Christ is born of God: and every one that loveth him that begat loveth him also that is begotten of him." Immediately, membership in God's family is conditioned: first of all, upon believing. "Whosoever believeth... is born of God." But much more than a bland and passive belief must this be, for the Apostle had already written earlier in his epistle, "Whosoever is born of God doth not commit sin" (3:9); also, "...love is of God; and every one that loveth is born of God, and knoweth God" (4:7). Every one born of God is a believer, and every one born of God does not commit sin; therefore every believer, every *true* and earnest believer does not commit sin—no mere verbal confession of faith is this. Christian belief and Christian life are inseparably linked. As a man believes, so he lives. As a man lives, so is his real belief. Not until we are willing to grant to Christ and His teachings complete authority in our lives, the control of our total being—mind and emotions and will—and accept His challenge to live without committing sin, not until

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***"Whosoever is born of God does not commit sin"—no mere verbal confession of faith is this!***

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then can we say we truly believe that Jesus is the Christ; not until then can we say we are born of God.

**Bible Love**

"And every one that loveth him that begat loveth him also that is begotten of him" (I John 5:1). The divine family is composed of intricacies too complicated for the human mind to fathom. And all membership in this family is grounded in one immortal word: love. If we accept God as our Father, we must also be prepared to love God's other children as brothers. This means that all our tendencies to selfishness, jealousy, pride and self-righteousness must go. We must treat our brothers in Christ with genuine Christian love.

The apostle John follows with the most practical side of this divine-human love: "By this we know that we love the children of God, when we love God, and keep his commandments" (v. 2). Notice that he is reversing the statement he just made in verse 1.

Our love for our brothers in Christ demonstrates our love for God; and our love for God is the real test of our love for the other members of His family. In other words, Christ's man must live a life of love. His preeminent duty is his love for God. How is this love expressed? Through obedience: "When we love God, and keep his commandments. For this is the love of God, that we keep his commandments: and his commandments are not grievous."

It has been suggested that John is here distinguishing between obedience that is outward and service that is motivated by love. John does not say that we must *obey* God's commandments to love God—we must do more, we must *keep* His commandments. Obey implies individual acts, as one would obey a fixed rule; keep suggests constant, overall obedience, as loyalty to a cherished principle. It is the difference between open action and that action which is motivated by a resolute will. It is obeying "from the heart that form of doctrine which was delivered you" (Rom. 6:17).

How do we keep God's commandments? By remembering "his commandments to do them" (Ps. 103:18); by washing and becoming clean (Isa. 1:16); by living in obedience to His Word: "Now ye are clean through the word which I have spoken unto you" (John 15:3). God's Word is the cleansing medium, and if we keep its precepts, we can know that we love God.

"And his commandments are not grievous" (I John 5:3). Peace and happiness, not drudgery and pain, are the result of surrendering wholly to God. "No good thing will he withhold from them that walk uprightly" (Ps. 84:11). Jesus' own metaphors—the wearing of the yoke, the bearing of the cross, the driving of the plow—tell us that character does not reach its best until it is controlled, harnessed, disciplined. An eminent psychiatrist has said that children need rules and discipline for emotional health as much as they need bread and butter for physical health. So the children of God need the discipline of God's commandments for spiritual and moral health. The word "disciple" implies discipline. And discipline is not burdensome—it is not meant to injure and grieve, for God disciplines the man he loves, "and scourges every son whom he receives. It is for discipline that you have to endure. God is treating you as sons;... if you get no discipline, then are you not sons but bastards.... He disciplines us for our good, that we may share in his own holiness. Discipline always seems for the time to be a thing of pain, not of joy; but those who are trained by it reap the fruit of it afterwards in the peace of an upright life" (Heb. 12:6-11, Moffatt Bible).

God's commandments are not grievous. "My yoke

is easy, and my burden is light"—a willing mind is what is needed to make it easy.

### Victory Over the World

"For whatsoever is born of God overcometh the world: and this is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith" (v. 4). To comprehend the full meaning of this victory we need to recall John's definition of the world: "Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world. And the world passeth away, and the lust thereof: but he that doeth the will of God abideth for ever" (I John 2: 15-17).

What faith is this that is so potent that it will empower us to overcome the world? Surely it cannot be faith in the sayings and precepts of men, or faith in our own strength and abilities, or the unstable reasonings of our own carnal mind. It is the faith that comes from God, that faith which is "the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen" (Heb. 11:1). It is the faith that comes by "hearing . . . the word of God" (Rom. 10: 17). We must hear and surrender to the authority of God's words in order to have this Bible faith, this good understanding. It must be a faith coupled with works, a "faith which worketh by love" (Gal. 5:6).

James gives a further thought on the faith that brings victory over the elements of the world: "Even so faith, if it hath not works, is dead, being alone." Faith without works is dead—it does not move to action. "Yea, a man may say, Thou hast faith, and I have works: show me thy faith without thy works, and I will show thee my faith by my works" (vs. 17-18). If we have this Bible faith, we will be doers; we will show our faith by our works. Bible faith makes us doers! "But wilt thou know, O vain man, that faith without works is dead?" (v. 20).

We might have all faith and understand the Bible from Genesis to Revelation, but without these works of righteousness, nothing would avail. "Was not Abraham our father justified by works, when he had offered Isaac his son upon the altar?" (v. 21). When Abraham was commanded to offer his son Isaac as a burnt offering, he did not stop and reason with the angel, but obeyed. "Seest thou how faith wrought with his works, and by works was faith made perfect?" This is the one faith that is the key to victory, the faith that is demonstrated by actions, the faith that fights—and overcomes.

What is the meaning of victory over the world? It is the victory that John expresses elsewhere in

his letter: the victory of joy over unhappiness (1:4); of honesty and principle over pride and self-deception (1:6-10); of righteousness and holiness over sin (2:1; 3:8-10); of purity over worldly lust (2:15-17); of truth over error (2:20-27); of confidence over fear, doubt and discouragement (2:28; 3:2); of love over hatred (2:10; 3:14-18); of eternal life over death and sin (2:17, 25).

How does the world assault the faith that overcomes? From without, but especially from within. Temptations from without incite evil passions that lie within. Evil inclinations and primal passions are ever ready to overpower the good. And the battlefield where the opposing forces clash and meet is not remote and distant; it is the sphere of the believer's daily life. It is on the battlefield of ordinary circumstances that Christian faith wins or loses, and the crown of Christian character is gained or lost.

### To Believe in Jesus Christ

The Apostle continues in verse 5: "Who is he that overcometh the world, but he that believeth that Jesus is the Son of God?" It is basic that we must be-

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*Character does not reach its best until it is controlled, harnessed, disciplined.*

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lieve in Jesus as the Son of God, the great Captain of our salvation. Furthermore, as we have shown above, everyone that believes in Jesus will not simply believe that a man named Jesus once lived and walked upon earth over nineteen hundred years ago, but will *live* as Jesus *lived*. He will *keep* His commandments. This same beloved disciple records Jesus' words in John 8:47: "He that is of God heareth God's words." To be a believer in a Bible sense we must keep God's commandments.

Jesus said in Mark 8:38: "Whosoever therefore shall be ashamed of me and of my words in this adulterous and sinful generation; of him also shall the Son of man be ashamed, when he cometh in the glory of his Father with the holy angels." To be ashamed of His words is to be ashamed of Jesus; and we dare not be ashamed either of Jesus or of His words. When we hear a Democrat say he is a believer in Thomas Jefferson, we understand that he means he believes in the principles of democracy as advocated by Thomas Jefferson. The same is true of believing in Jesus. It is to believe His truth, these wonderful words of life, and accept His unquestioned authority in our lives. A Bible believer

is one who not only hears and believes the Word of God, but *acts* on that belief.

If we really believe these words, we will heed the advice of John recorded in II John 8: "Look to yourselves, that we lose not those things which we have wrought, but that we receive a full reward." We should look to ourselves, that we lose not the things that we have worked for, the life and glory that shall never pass away. It is so easy to slacken our vigil and lose our reward.

"Whosoever transgresseth, and abideth not in the doctrine of Christ, hath not God. He that abideth in the doctrine of Christ, he hath both the Father and the Son" (v. 9). What is it to have God? It is to abide in the doctrine of Christ, to believe the Word which He proclaimed; and to be one with the Father and Jesus by exemplifying this doctrine.

### By Water and Blood

Now let us read I John 5:6: "This is he that came by water and blood, even Jesus Christ; not by water only, but by water and blood." John is emphasizing the fact that Jesus came not by water only, but by water and blood. What does he mean?

To understand this passage we must remember

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*Bible faith makes us doers!*  
*"But wilt thou know, O vain man,*  
*that faith without works is dead?"*

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a rule which God gave for our instruction through the apostle Paul: "Which things also we speak, not in the words which man's wisdom teacheth, but which the Holy Spirit teacheth; comparing spiritual things with spiritual" (I Cor. 2:13).

In John 4 we learn about this same spiritual water. Beginning at verse 10, we read Jesus' words to the woman of Samaria: "If thou knewest the gift of God, and who it is that saith to thee, Give me to drink; thou wouldest have asked of him, and he would have given thee living water." Here is living water which Jesus was offering. "Whosoever drinketh of this water shall thirst again: but whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst; but the water that I shall give him shall be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life" (John 4:13-14). This is the water in which we must wash, and this is the water by which Jesus came.

We read again of this water in Isaiah 12: "Behold, God is my salvation; I will trust, and not be afraid: for the Lord Jehovah is my strength and my song; he also is become my salvation. Therefore

with joy shall ye draw water out of the wells of salvation" (vs. 2-3). God furnishes this spiritual water in wells of salvation; it is living water, saving water.

First John 5:6 specifies that Jesus came by water and blood. By diligent application He acquired a knowledge of the truth of His Father. In that way He came by water, and not by water only. More than enlightenment was essential. In like manner, we too must come by water and blood. We might know the teachings of Jesus, and be able to recite the Bible from Genesis to Revelation, but that would not avail to our salvation. We must have water and blood. Blood signifies death. A life must be taken. Jesus came by water and by blood. He crucified His own desires and ways and submitted Himself wholly to the will of His heavenly Father. "For in that he died, he died unto sin once: but in that he liveth, he liveth unto God. Likewise reckon ye also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord" (Rom. 6:10-11). Jesus being made in all points like unto His brethren (Heb. 2:17), He experienced the same temptations as they. He had to die to sin, overcome every evil, and we must follow His steps and do the same.

This is how He came by blood. He laid down His life, of Himself; no man took it from Him (John 10:17-18). He laid down His life, willingly surrendering His own desires, doing only and always those things which pleased His Father (John 8:29). This is how He came by blood, and we must do the same. "Knowing this, that our old man is crucified with him, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin" (Rom. 6:6). The plan of salvation set forth by Jesus includes not only the water, the knowledge of God's law, but blood, that which terminates the life of the old man of the flesh.

In Romans 6 we are told more of how we must come by blood: "For in that he [Jesus] died, he died unto sin once: but in that he liveth, he liveth unto God." That is why Jesus is said to have come by blood. He had to take a life, had to crucify His flesh. "Likewise," says Paul, "reckon *ye also yourselves* to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord." We each must die to sin for ourselves. "Let not sin therefore reign in your mortal body, that ye should obey it in the lusts thereof" (vs. 10-12).

In II Timothy 2 we find this same truth confirmed: "It is a faithful saying: For if we be dead with him, we shall also live with him: if we suffer, we shall also reign with him: if we deny him, he also will deny us" (vs. 11-12). Jesus had to learn

*(Continued on page 22)*



# On Simplicity

OUR LIFE is frittered away by detail," writes a well-known author. "Simplify! simplify!"

Have we not all felt the same way at times and made an effort to get down to the real basic issues of life? But what a blessed virtue to possess that singleness of heart exemplified by our Lord and the faithful ones, that whole-soul determination that keeps a straight-ahead course, come what may.

It almost seems like simplicity is an impossibility in an age so complex as ours, where we are too often torn in too many directions. We have such an abundance of material blessings which should serve to simplify our lives. Yet we have so much knowledge available, and so many pleasurable activities, and so many cares and responsibilities of a temporal nature that too often these lesser concerns take more than their proper share of our hearts and lives.

The command to the striving life-seeker is the same today as it has been through all ages: "Let thine eyes look right on, and let thine eyelids look straight before thee. Ponder the path of thy feet, and let all thy ways be established. Turn not to the right hand nor to the left: remove thy foot from evil" (Prov. 4:25-27). No matter how complex our present-day society, we know that the simple life is not only possible but imperative, if we want the reward.

Whatever is truly great is truly simple. The inner voice of any creative worker is continually whispering, "Simplify!" But the path to simplicity is apt to be long and cluttered, as it is distinctly opposed to the mind of the natural man. Our only guide is the divine wisdom that has called us to the simple way. So let us turn to our Guidebook for help and direction.

Probably the most direct message we have recorded for our understanding was given to us by our Master when He said, "Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon earth, where moth and rust doth corrupt, and where thieves break through and steal: but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust doth corrupt, and where thieves do not break through nor steal: for where your treasure is, there will your heart be also" (Matt. 6:19-21). Earthly treasure acquires

heavenly value only as it can be used to the glory and honor of God.

Jesus speaks further of simplicity: "The light of the body is the eye: if therefore thine eye be single, thy whole body shall be full of light. . . . No man can serve two masters: for either he will hate the one, and love the other; or else he will hold to the one, and despise the other. Ye cannot serve God and mammon. . . . [Be not therefore anxious], saying, What shall we eat? or, What shall we drink? or, Wherewithal shall we be clothed? (For after all these things do the Gentiles seek:) for your heavenly Father knoweth that ye have need of all these things.

"But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you" (Matt. 6:22-33).

How easy it is to accumulate the perishable! And how easy to have our minds all absorbed with the things we can see—houses, autos, furniture, clothing, letters, boxes, pictures, dishes, books, papers, and fineries of all kinds. All have their place in our lives, and what can be of service we should value and use as good stewards of that which God has provided. But we have the definite command not to lay up treasures upon earth, and we must learn to be ruthless with anything for which we have no definite purpose or use.

The apostle Paul is an excellent example of one who took Jesus' wise counsel to heart. It is hard to imagine a life more full of variety and complication than Paul's, yet he kept the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus ever before him. That was the goal toward which he pressed continually. He had that single eye which kept him in the strait and narrow way. His motto was not, "These many things have I done," but "This one thing I do." His eye was fixed forward. He learned to say "no" to anything that was not in direct line with his goal. To the Corinthians he wrote, "You know, do you not, that at the sports all the runners run the race, though only one wins the prize. Like them, run to win! But every athlete goes into strict training. They do it to win a fading wreath; we, a wreath that never fades. For my part, I run with a clear

*(Continued on Page 8)*

## Self-Denial Week

As an assist in bearing our daily cross of self-denial and self-discipline, the members of the Megiddo Church each year set aside one week as Self-Denial Week. The week begins this year with Sunday, February 6. During this time only three articles of food will be taken at any one meal. Exceptions, of course, are made for the sick and aged, and those on special diets. No meats, poultry, fish, cheese (except cottage cheese), eggs or pastry will have place on the menu; but vegetables (seasoned to taste) and common fruits (fresh, frozen or canned), cereals, milk (no tea or coffee), bread and butter may be eaten freely. Surely a meal of three articles of staple food can scarcely be termed denial; nevertheless, it is a restriction, and an assist to those who seek self-mastery.

Believing this practice to be beneficial both for physical well-being and spiritual growth, our founder, Rev. L. T. Nichols, inaugurated the custom many years ago. Let us enter it with a fresh spirit of cheerfulness and gratitude, determined to make it a season of concentrated spiritual growth and development. ●●

## Free Leaflets for you to distribute

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Light in the Dark

Do You Believe in a Future Life?

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**SEND TODAY!**

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## On Simplicity

*(Continued from page 7)*

goal before me; I am like a boxer who does not beat the air: I bruise my own body and make it know its master, for fear that after preaching to others I should find myself rejected." All the many details of Paul's journey through life contributed to one central purpose.

Let us also take for our motto, "This one thing I do." With so many demands for our time and attention, we all too often try to juggle too many activities at once. We live life in a continuous stream of hours and days.

It might help us simplify our daily living by experimenting with a suggestion which recently came to my attention. The suggestion is this: to live life as a series of separate projects and episodes or experiences. It was referred to as "packaging our time." The idea is mentally to draw a ring around each experience to isolate it from the others. This is not accomplished easily. It will demand many emphatic "no's" to self, but if it means a simpler life, it is worth a try.

"By two wings a man is lifted up from things earthly; namely, by simplicity and purity. Simplicity ought to be in our intention; purity in our affections. Simplicity tends toward God; purity takes hold of and tastes Him.

"A lover of Jesus and of the truth, and a true inward Christian, and one free from unruly affections, can freely turn himself unto God and lift himself above himself.

"He who can live inwardly and make small account of things without, neither seeks places, nor waits for times for performing religious exercises. A spiritual person quickly recollects himself, because he never pours out himself wholly to outward things. . . . A man is hindered and distracted in proportion as he draws outward things to himself."

A few more thoughts from our divine Guidebook are:

"A double-minded man is unstable in all his ways" (Jas. 1:8).

"Cleanse your hands, ye sinners; and purify your hearts, ye double-minded" (James 4:8).

"Set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth" (Col. 3:2).

Let us pray for courage, without which we can never hope to attain true simplicity. The equipment for the inner life of prayer is in itself simple. It consists of a quiet place, a quiet time and a quiet heart. And because the morning is one end of the thread on which the day's activities are strung, it should be well-knotted with devotion. ●●



# Is She Really Dead?

To the Editor of the Megiddo Message:

I have been reading your literature for years, and felt concerned when I read the following in our local newspaper:

*"I am nine years old. I hope you can answer the question I'm asking. You see, my grandmother died not too long ago. She was a Christian. Is she really dead?"*

Here is the answer to this earnest inquiry, given by the world-known evangelist, Rev. Billy Graham:

*"No, your grandmother is not really dead. Only her body died. She is more alive now than ever before. You see, God couldn't let your grandmother live on in a body that was getting old and feeble and racked with pain. In His kindness and goodness He took her spirit to be with Him. The Bible says: 'We are confident . . . and willing rather to be absent from the body, and to be present with the Lord' II Cor. 5:8. Dead? Why, she's never been more alive! How kind of the Lord to take your dear grandmother by the hand and lead her into His Presence! And it is not as though you will never see her again."*

*"If you put your hand in God's hand (and perhaps you have already done this), and let Jesus come into your heart, you will see your grandmother again in heaven. The Bible says: 'Now we see through a glass darkly, but then face to face.' Isn't that a wonderful thing! And you will know her, because the Bible says, 'Then shall we know, even also, as we are known.'"*

*"But you don't need to wait until you get to heaven, to have heaven in you. Jesus said, 'The kingdom of God is within you,' and He will bring the joy of heaven to your heart, when you trust Him fully. May God bless you."*

It seems to me that Mr. Graham's answer does not agree with what I have learned to be the truth of the Bible. And it is sad to see an earnest young inquirer given such an unfounded hope. I only wish that the child could be made to understand the truth of the matter. Could you please publish comment on the article; perchance this child may have opportunity to read it.

Yours for a true religion,  
A Reader in Florida

**I**N THE first words of Mr. Graham's reply to this child's earnest and innocent question, "Is she really dead?", the evangelist answered, "No, your grandmother is not really dead. Only her body died. . . . God . . . took her spirit to be with Him." Mr. Graham is here stating as fact the almost universally accepted—and false—doctrine that the soul of man is immortal and a separate entity from the body.

Historians tell us that this doctrine crept into the church after it apostatized from the true teachings of the Bible. Such a doctrine is purely of pagan origin; it formed no part of the original teaching of the early Christians. It is without Bible foundation of any sort.

Supporters of this false theory quote: "Then shall the dust return to the earth as it was: and the spirit shall return unto God who gave it" (Eccl. 12:7). But this verse does not lend support. The Hebrew word here translated "spirit" is *ruach*. The Hebrew Lexicon gives as some of its meanings: "To

breathe, breath of air." The true meaning of the Hebrew word *ruach* is as translated in Psalm 104: 29, "Thou takest away their breath [*ruach*]; they die and return to their dust." Its meaning is also illustrated in Job 27:3 where we find the "spirit of God" defined in the margin as "the breath which God gave him." And in Eccl. 3:19 this same Hebrew word *ruach* is used to describe the breath of both men and beasts: "They have all one breath; so that a man hath no preeminence above a beast." In this verse, "spirit" and "breath" are used interchangeably.

Of the more than 1600 times the words translated "soul" and "spirit" are used in the Bible, not even once are they called immortal or undying. Nor is there anything in the Bible that teaches that the soul or spirit of a man is a separate part that never dies. Man does not *have* a soul: he *is* a soul. The word "soul" is often used in the Bible simply to de-

note a person, as the "seventy souls" who went down into Egypt with Jacob. And souls can die: "The soul that sinneth, it shall die" (Ezek. 18:20), and "every soul, which will not hear that prophet, shall be destroyed . . ." (Acts 3:23).

I observe that Mr. Graham gave no Bible proof for his statement that "she is more alive now than ever before," nor did he offer a Scripture text to prove that God took the child's grandmother to heaven at her death. There is no Scripture to support either premise. There is nothing in the whole Bible that would indicate any life after death except through a resurrection. Can we say that this child's grandmother "is more alive now than ever before," when God says through the Psalmist: "Put not your trust in princes, nor in the son of man, in whom there is no help. His breath goeth forth, he returneth to his earth; in that very day his thoughts perish" (Ps. 146:3-4)?

Mr. Graham repeats to this innocent child: "Why, she's never been more alive!" Can we agree with Mr. Graham, when God's Word declares: "The living know that they shall die: but the dead know not anything, . . . also their love, and their hatred, and their envy, is now perished"; and "Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with thy might; for there is no work, nor device, nor knowledge, nor wisdom, in the grave, whither thou goest" (Eccl. 9:5-6, 10)?

Mr. Graham pictures the Lord leading the grandmother by the hand into heaven. But Jesus said to His faithful followers: "Whither I go, ye cannot come, . . . I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also" (John 13:33; 14:3). And through the Revelator He assured us that He would come and that His reward would be with Him (Rev. 22:12)—not that He would take them to heaven to receive their reward.

Mr. Graham would teach the child that the Lord took the grandmother to heaven at death; but God's prophet says, "The righteous shall never be removed: but the wicked shall not inhabit the earth" (Prov. 10:30). He further tells the child that if she will do God's will now, "you will see your grandmother again in heaven." But the Psalmist tells us six times in chapter 37 that the righteous shall inherit the land forever. And Jesus, repeating one of these Psalms, says, "Blessed are the meek; for they shall inherit the earth" (Matt. 5:5).

Mr. Graham indicates that the faithful are rewarded in heaven, but the writer to the Hebrews lists many of the faithful of past ages who are still waiting for their reward: "These all died in faith, not having received the promises, but having seen them afar off" (Heb. 11:13). Jesus told His fol-

lowers that they would be "recompensed at the resurrection of the just" (Luke 14:14). The apostle Peter said that "when the chief Shepherd shall appear ye shall receive a crown of glory that fadeth not away" (I Pet. 5:4). And Paul, the greatest of the apostles, also tells us when the reward will be given: "For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ; that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad" (II Cor. 5:10).

Mr. Graham quoted II Cor. 5:8 as a proof text, where Paul says he was "willing rather to be absent from the body, and to be present with the Lord." But the Apostle did not say here or in any other writings that the soul, or spirit, or body, goes to heaven to be with the Lord. Paul knew that he would die, or "be absent from the body" (of mortality), asleep in death, until the resurrection, when he would rise to be present with the Lord, when he would receive the crown laid up for him and "all them also that love his [Christ's] appearing" (II Tim. 4:7-8). After he fell asleep in death, Paul's next conscious moment would be the resurrection and his meeting with Christ. Hence he could say he was "willing rather to be absent from the body, and to be present with the Lord"—his one longing was for the crown of life.

Paul points to the necessity of a resurrection in First Corinthians: "If there be no resurrection of the dead, then is Christ not risen: and if Christ be not risen, then is our preaching vain, and your faith is also vain" (15:13-14). In other words, Paul is telling us that Christ would not be at the Father's right hand had not God raised Him from death's slumber; He would still be in the grave. And without a resurrection, all would end in the grave, and our preaching and our hope would be in vain.

In conclusion Mr. Graham told this child, "You don't have to wait until you get to heaven to have heaven in you. Jesus said, 'the kingdom of God is within you.'"

The marginal reference in the King James Version clarifies this passage by substituting the words "among you" for "within you." In other words, the future King of all the earth was among them, in their midst, and they did not recognize Him.

No, the Kingdom of God is not a product of the imagination or something that can leap into the human heart, and certainly not in the hearts of those wicked Pharisees to whom Jesus was addressing the words. Such a kingdom would make void the Holy Scriptures. God's kingdom is yet future, and it will transcend any kingdom known to mortal man. Its establishment will be the greatest event that has ever occurred on this planet.

The teaching concerning the Kingdom of God is the lifeline of the whole Bible. Upon that kingdom Bible prophecy focuses. It is the theme of David's song, Isaiah's prophecy, Daniel's dreams, Zechariah's visions. It was the theme of Jesus' ministry and the apostles' main teaching, and Revelation gives us a glimpse of this earth made over new when all evil, sorrow, pain, and even death itself is forever banished and Christ is its eternal King.

By its very definition:

Every kingdom must have a king.

Every kingdom must have territory.

Every kingdom must have laws.

Every kingdom must have a populace.

Of God's kingdom let us ask: Who is the King?

Let the angel Gabriel answer in his words to Mary: "Thou shalt . . . bring forth a son, and shalt call his name Jesus. He shall be great, . . . and the Lord God shall give unto him the throne of his father David: and he shall reign over the house of Jacob forever; and of his kingdom there shall be no end" (Luke 1:32-33).

Let Jesus answer: "Certainly . . . I am a king. This is why I was born, this is why I came into

the world, to bear testimony to the truth" (John 18:37, Moffatt Bible).

Where is its territory?

Let Jeremiah answer: "A King shall reign and prosper, and shall execute judgment and justice in the earth" (23:5).

Let Zechariah answer: "The Lord shall be king over all the earth" (14:9).

What are the laws?

Let Isaiah answer: "For out of Zion shall go forth the law, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem" (Isa. 2:3).

Who are the populace?

Let the Psalmist tell us: "Those that wait upon the Lord, they shall inherit the earth" (Ps. 37:9).

Let Jesus tell us: "Blessed are the meek: for they shall inherit the earth" (Matt. 5:5).

Let the Wise Man tell us: "The righteous shall never be removed: but the wicked shall not inhabit the earth" (Prov. 10:30).

Whom shall we believe—Mr. Graham, who is teaching the commandments and doctrines of men, or the prophets, apostles and Jesus who are voicing the truth of God's Holy Word? ••

## Announcement

The New Year is coming!

The Abib celebration at the Megiddo Church will be held this year from sundown April 13 to sundown April 14, Bible time being reckoned from evening to evening (Lev. 23:32). The day will be marked by special programs and activities in commemoration of the New Year and in honor of Jesus Christ, our coming Priest and King.

The spring equinox occurs this year on March 20, and the first new moon following that date (April 13, this year) marks the beginning of the new year and the month Abib, as given to Moses in the wilderness.

We extend to all who desire to come and worship and praise with us our sincerest invitation.

Abib First occurring on April 13, the annual commemoration of the New Passover instituted by Jesus on the thirteenth of Abib will fall on the evening of April 25, the anniversary of Jesus' Resurrection will be the morning of Abib 15 or April 28, and Pentecost, fifty days later, will fall on June 16. ••

February, 1972

# HAVE YOU READ?--

## Eleven instructive booklets

HISTORY OF THE MEGIDDO MISSION  
THE COMING OF JESUS AND ELIJAH  
WHAT MUST WE DO TO BE SAVED?  
GOD'S SPIRITUAL CREATION  
THE KINGDOM OF GOD  
THE GREAT APOSTASY  
AFTER DEATH, WHAT?  
THE DEVIL AND HELL  
THE HOLY SPIRIT  
THE SABBATH  
THE TRINITY

ALL for \$1.00, Postpaid.

SEND FOR YOUR SET TODAY!



# Depth

WHO IS not fascinated by a tree!

In our God's wonderful creation, a tree is a most irresistible source of inspiration and instruction. The giant redwood, tall and straight, reaching toward the sky, inspires reverence and awe; the twisted and gnarled pines stunted on a windswept mountain range, desperately struggling for life, speak to me of determination, of cheer and of challenge.

How fittingly God likens the righteous to trees planted by the river of water, bringing forth fruit in season (Psalm 1). They drink deep from the hidden wells of salvation (Isa. 12:3), the unfailing Word of the Lord, to supply themselves with strength and endurance. In a land of almost complete dearth they remain alive and flourishing, bringing forth fruit in abundance, some one hundredfold, some sixtyfold, some thirtyfold. In whatever they do, they prosper.

The prophet Jeremiah presents a parallel passage, using the same figure of speech but with some amplification. The man who trusts in the Lord "shall be as a tree planted by the waters and that spreadeth out her roots by the river, and shall not see when heat cometh, but her leaf shall be green; and shall not be careful in the year of drought, neither shall cease from yielding fruit" (Jer. 17:8).

The wicked are not so; they are as the chaff "which the wind driveth away" (Ps. 1:4). Why? Because not settled, rooted and grounded, they have not a firm hold on eternal realities. Without God and without a goal, rootless and fruitless, lacking confidence in God's faithfulness and His Word, they are blown before the tempest and shall not stand in the Judgment.

The secret of the tree that prospers under all circumstances is its location: It is planted by the river of water, and spreads her roots by the river. These faithful souls put down their roots deep and firm to reach below the permanent water level. Despite the drought, they have access to a hidden water supply.

Jacob's well was deep, the waters sweet and cool, yet those who drank of it thirsted again; "But

whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him," said the Master, "shall never thirst." Here is the well of water that springs up into everlasting life. All its springs are of God. Trees growing by these waters produce rich harvests of spiritual fruit.

The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance. These are the heart-fruits we must bring forth in season. Doing our best in meeting actual conditions brings forth our fruit: where hatred abounds, love may be dispensed; where sadness and sorrow press, joy may be found; when all is turmoil, peace may flourish; when patience is tried, longsuffering may be practiced; goodness never falters, even when others are indifferent or antagonistic; faithfulness holds firm; meekness never loses its composure; and self-restraint keeps its place when there is every reason for self-expression.

Such are the beautiful trees of God, whose leaf is not only green, but growing. Filled with the spirit of truth, they work, strive and overcome, bearing fruits in great profusion.

The ungodly are not so, who trust in man and make flesh their arm. The result: they depart from God, and in the end meet destruction.

Happy is the heart that like a tree is rooted deeply, and is prospering sincere and stable, sustained and sustaining. ●●

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## Words to WALK By

Reputation is precious, but character is priceless.

*Never does a man portray his own character more vividly than in his manner of portraying another.*

Some men's religion is stiff-jointed because it is continually taking the rest cure.

*Do all the good you can, by all the means you can, in all the ways you can, in all the places you can, at all the times you can, to all the people you can, as long as ever you can.*

Exclude religion from education and you have no foundation upon which to build moral character.

*What you are when you are alone and at liberty is the supreme test of what you are.*

Cheerfulness is what greases the axles of the world. Some people go through life creaking.

MEGIDDO MESSAGE

# UNDERSTANDING THE BIBLE

"Study to shew thyself approved unto God."

## The Devil of the Bible

**FLAGRANT** misconceptions that exist today regarding the devil of the Bible cannot be attributed to the sacred Scriptures but to man's faulty interpretations of the Scriptures. The Bible itself is plain: "Every man is tempted"—when he is beguiled by the devil? No, "every man is tempted, when he is drawn away of his own lust, and enticed" (Jas. 1:13-14). The apostle Peter tells us that "no prophecy of scripture is of any private interpretation" (II Pet. 1:20), but this admonition has not been heeded. No sooner was the Bible translated into the common tongue and made available to all men than men began to pen their varied understandings of its pages.

From history we learn that belief in evil spirits antedates Christianity by many centuries. According to tradition, "demons were created by God before the world was made." Among these demons Satan was supposed to be chief. Another ancient theory held that "certain angels forsook their allegiance to God, descended to earth, and married the daughters of men, and their offspring were demons." The captive Jews became exposed to these pagan beliefs through their association with the Persians, and apostatizing from their ancient faith, they gradually absorbed paganism. The Persians had long "had an elaborate angelology and demonology, and much of this seems to have passed over into later Jewish thought."

Bible students freely admit that the Old Testament does not contain the concept of Satan and the devil as it is understood today, but that the Hebrew *stn*, rendered "Satan," was simply an adversary or enemy of God. The present-day concept of Satan is the result of man's interpretation of the Bible influenced by Persian demonology, Greek mythology and Milton's *Paradise Lost*.

In our last lesson we studied the Armstrong or **Radio Church of God** concept of the devil and Satan and found it to be without Scriptural foundation. We also learned who Lucifer was, that he was not the devil, but a man, an earthly king who was dethroned because of his wickedness.

In this lesson we will continue our study of various concepts of the devil, following our outline:

## VII. CONCEPTS OF THE DEVIL

- C. The Adventist Concept
- D. The Catholic Viewpoint
- E. The Jehovah's Witness Concept

Throughout this study we have given ample proof that the devil of theology is not the devil of the Bible. The word devil signifies simply "an adversary, one opposed to God," hence anything or anybody opposed to God or His will is called a devil or Satan. We read in Hebrews 2:14 that Jesus Christ came to "destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil," and from the book of James we learn that "Sin when it is finished, bringeth forth death." These two verses alone prove that the devil of the Bible is only sin personified.

## VII. CONCEPTS OF THE DEVIL

While no other denomination presents so fantastic a tale of the origin of the devil as Mr. Armstrong, we find that the beliefs of most major faiths, both Catholic and Protestant, recognize Lucifer as the original devil. There are diverse opinions as to how he fell from his high estate, but most seem to agree that he was an angel in the high courts of heaven before he became the devil or Satan. Having taken up residence on the earth, he personally directs all that is in opposition to God. We will study a cross section of what others have to say about the devil and Satan.

### C. The Adventist Concept

The Adventist concept of the devil or Satan differs somewhat from that of major Protestant churches. Adventist literature describes Satan, his origin and his work in great detail. We will study only the major parts of the doctrine, comparing it with Scripture.

**1. The origin of Satan or the devil.** According to Adventism, sin came into the world via the devil, also known as "the great dragon, that old serpent, Satan," and "Lucifer, son of the morning."

In the book, **God Speaks to Modern Man**, we find the origin of the devil explained. We quote: "How did Lucifer originate? Lucifer was created... Where was Lucifer created? That Lucifer was created in heaven and that heaven was his abode are beyond all reasonable question."

It is further explained in the book that the "king of Tyrus" of Ezekiel 28:13-14 is this same Lucifer. Referring to these verses, the writer says, "That this is a picture of Lucifer in the magnificent glory at the throne of God admits of little doubt... Lucifer is seen in the presence of the great Creator and His Christ, and the ceaseless beams of undimmed glory play upon his elegant form. He seems to be walking on 'stones of fire.' "\*"

The Adventist explanation of the origin of the devil reads more like an imaginative storybook. It is based largely on assumption and will not stand the test of "Prove all things." To say that these conclusions are "beyond all reasonable question" and "admit of little doubt" stretches the imagination to the breaking point.

Who was Lucifer? The Bible narrative concerning him is explicit. **He was a man, the king of Babylon.** Isaiah 14:16 reads, **"Is this the man that made the earth to tremble, that didst shake kingdoms?"**

**2. The war in heaven.** Continuing with the Adventist theory, this Lucifer who became the devil 'had been most honored of God, and next to Christ, stood highest in power and glory among the inhabitants of heaven,... holy and undefiled." But Lucifer became dissatisfied with his position and sought to take over the throne of God by force. This, say the Adventists, brought about the "war in heaven" described in Rev. 12:7-9. The outcome was certain from the beginning: Satan was to be cast out of heaven to make his abode on the earth. Quoting from the above-mentioned book, we read: "Yes, Lucifer and his angels fell from their high estate, and left their beautiful home in heaven... They sought to take over heaven by force, and they left heaven by force. Christ and His angels cast them out."

The idea of war or any kind of turmoil in heaven where God dwells is absurd and defies reason. That angels should rebel and fall from their high estate is likewise ridiculous. From Luke 20:35-36 we learn that angels cannot die. Certainly God would not grant eternal life to any who would later rise up against His divine authority and desecrate His heavenly abode. Nor does the Bible give any proof that Lucifer or the prince of Tyrus ever were in heaven. It is obvious that the language is simply descriptive of their earthly destinies. The king of Babylon was brought low because he exalted him-

self. The prince of Tyrus also was a man; he represents a class who had covenanted to work in the Lord's vineyard, Eden, the spiritual garden of the Lord. They had failed to keep their vow and were to be cast out.

**3. Satan's work on the earth.** According to Adventism, Satan's first work upon arriving on the earth was to deceive Eve in the garden of Eden, thus causing Adam and Eve to lose their power of dominion and be cast out of the garden. Satan at once took over and "usurped the dominion that God had given to man... Satan claimed this dominion when he showed Christ the kingdoms of this world (Luke 4:6). Three and a half years later He [Christ] died on Calvary to purchase the dominion with His precious blood."\*

From the time of Adam and Eve until now, Satan has carried out his work in the earth through deception. "Since Lucifer led into deception great hosts of angels who had never sinned, and led our first parents into sin, is it unreasonable to suppose that he would be highly successful in deceiving religious leaders and using them to teach error from the pulpit itself?"\*

The above quotations are only a brief portion of the Adventist discussion of the subject with which we are concerned, but they contain their basic doctrine as we understand it. The whole doctrine is based on the false conception that a literal devil existed since the time of creation and is still at work deceiving men and women in the earth. It also assumes the doctrines of original sin and the vicarious atonement of Christ to be true. (These subjects will be covered in later lessons.)

Who was the serpent that tempted Eve? True, the devil, Satan, and the serpent are one and the same (Rev. 20:2), but that fact does not prove them to be literal. **The serpent is the personification of sin just as the devil and Satan are. The serpent that tempted Eve was her own natural mind which rebelled against the higher law of God, thus leading her to disobey.** (See the October, 1971 issue for further explanation of the subject.)

**The devil or serpent that tempted Eve is still at work in the world today, but it is not a literal person, only sin and all sinners.**

#### D. The Catholic Viewpoint

From **The Catholic Encyclopedia for School and Home** it appears that the Catholic doctrine varies but little from others. The origin of the devil is described as follows:

"The angels who rebelled against God were

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\* *God Speaks to Modern Man*, pp. 82, 83, 93.



driven out of heaven and condemned to hell forever. They are the devils, and their leader is called the devil. He is also known as Satan, adversary, Lucifer (light-bearer, signifying his great intelligence) and Beelzebub or demon. . . . The nature of sin committed by the fallen angels is a matter of theological speculation."

Of Satan, the same encyclopedia says, "A proper name designating a personal evil being, actively hostile to God and man. As a noun, 'satan' does not occur in the Bible until the New Testament. . . . Influenced by an increased speculation in Jewish circles on the subject of evil spirits, the New Testament explicitly calls the Archfiend, the devil, by the personal name of Satan. He is the 'ancient serpent,' the evil chaotic principle of the world, and also the serpent of Paradise who tempted the first parents to sin (Wisdom 2:24).

"Satan reveals his main purpose in this world at the very beginning of man's history: to tempt man to sin. The kingdom of Satan is the earthly realm of bodily pain and suffering which are the essential components of the death brought into the world as a result of Satan's first victory over mankind in Eden. . . . There is no suggestion in the Old Testament of two independent forces, one good and the other evil. On the contrary, it is always made clear that Satan is subject to God and that he cannot harm men who resist him."

Like the doctrines already reviewed, the Catholic doctrine, given here only in part, is based on error from the beginning.

**1. Rebellious angels.** This point was covered in our previous study. God's holy angels never rebelled against Him or made war in heaven.

**2. Lucifer not the devil.** The name **Lucifer** has the meaning of "light-bearer," but does not necessarily refer to a superintelligence. In the case of this wicked king it denoted his high position in the political heavens. (See our January issue for a detailed discussion of "Who Is Lucifer?").

**3. Satan an adversary.** This is a point of truth. Old Testament usage confirms the fact that there was no belief in a literal devil or Satan among the Jews. (Notice the mention of "the influence of an increased speculation in Jewish circles on the subject of evil spirits." This shows that the doctrine came from pagans who believed in evil spirits and not from the Bible.) The Bible explicitly condemns belief in spirits or wizardry. Israel was forbidden to "imitate the abominable customs of those other nations" (Deut. 18:9-12).

**4. The serpent in Paradise.** Supporting proof for the serpent's being Satan is given from the Apocryphal book of Wisdom. This is not recognized as part of the Bible and is not acceptable proof. **The ser-**

**pent in the garden is sin personified. It was Eve's own natural mind which led her to rebel against the commandment of God.**

**5. Satan's purpose.** This is contradictory. God would not create a being for the purpose of tempting men. "Every man is tempted when he is drawn away of his own lust, and enticed" (James 1:14). This is the Word of God; we cannot believe otherwise. Satan had nothing to do with "bodily pain and suffering"; nor with death that results from them. All these are the results of man's inherent mortality; the devil or Satan has no part in it.

The point that "he [the devil] cannot harm men who resist him," is true. Men can, if they desire, resist the evil impulse, but unfortunately, the majority do not.

### **E. The Jehovah's Witness Concept**

The Witnesses differ from most other denominations in that they recognize Lucifer for what he was: The King of Babylon. However, they present a fanciful tale as to the origin of Satan and a whole army of demons which he supposedly commands.

From whence came these demons? "Jehovah God did not create the demons. He would not create spirit creatures in opposition to him and whom he would cast out of His heavenly organization. . . . Their defectiveness is of their own making. They have taken themselves out of the family of God's children. . . ."

Jehovah's Witnesses place the origin of the devil at the time of Adam and Eve in the garden of Eden. According to their theory, Adam and Eve were "pure in heart," yet "temptation invaded that garden in Eden." The temptation came by way of the serpent. The question is asked: "Who, then, caused the serpent to talk to Eve?" And the answer runs thus: "It was not God, because. . . what was said was the opposite of what God said. . . . It must have been some superhuman invisible intelligent creature that made the serpent talk. It must have been one of the 'sons of God' who had shouted in applause at God's creation of the earth. This angelic son had now turned traitor to his own heavenly Father. He not only rebelled against God his Father, but he also began teaching others to rebel against God. He thus made himself a resister or 'adversary' of God, and the Hebrew word for this is **Satan**. . . . By rebelling against God, this son of God made himself Satan . . . . Thus this spirit son of God became a self-made Satan or Adversary of the Sovereign of heaven and earth. . . . The spirit son of God, now Satan, used a lie to deceive Eve."\*

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\* *Things in Which It Is Impossible for God to Lie*, Watchtower and Tract Society, 1965.

And from another book we read: "The name 'devil' is drawn from the Greek word **diabolos** and means 'false accuser, slanderer.' By this lie against God the rebellious son of God made himself a devil or false accuser. . . . In this way he became the one whom the Holy Bible calls Satan the Devil. . . . He was not of God's making, but he was what he made himself.

"Satan the Devil is not an airy creature, but he is invisible because he is spiritual. He is very powerful in the invisible spiritual realm, particularly with reference to our earth and its atmosphere. Since mankind's fall into sin and death at the garden of Eden, he has been the one 'having the means to cause death' (Heb. 2:14). . . . He is the 'ruler of the authority of the air' by having control over a powerful spirit organization in the air. Hence men who are the 'sons of disobedience' toward God breathe in, as it were, the spirit of Satan the Devil and in their daily lives they live by his spirit."

Satan and his followers supposedly lived in heaven among the "sons of God" until 1914 when they were hurled down to the earth during a supposed "war in heaven," brought about by the establishment of God's Messianic kingdom. "They were confined to the atmosphere of our earth, and so woes resulted for the earth and for the sea. Satan the Devil has caused strife amongst the nations and is responsible for all the unrighteous wars that have been fought between men, and all the wicked murders, all heinous crimes and other corrupt acts that have been committed."\*\*

This is but a small portion of the doctrine contained in the books of this well-known organization, but it is sufficient to show the gross error it contains. We will point out some of the errors.

**1. The existence of demons and evil spirits is assumed.** The belief in the existence of evil spirits is admitted by the writers to have come from the ancient Babylonians ("Babylon the Great Has Fallen," page 567), yet it is accepted as truth. As before stated, God condemns all such beliefs; they are an abomination to Him.

**2. The serpent in the garden.** This subject has also been covered in previous lessons. **There was no literal serpent in the garden and no devil telling it what to say. The serpent represented the woman's natural tendency to evil, her own evil desires, wanting her own way and not God's.** The idea of a "superhuman invisible intelligent creature that made the serpent talk" is based on someone's fanciful imagination and is but a fable.

**3. Rebellion in heaven.** This too, has been covered in other concepts. **There never was nor could there ever be a war or rebellion in God's heaven.** "God is not the author of confusion, but of peace, as in all churches of the saints" (I Cor. 14:33). If God would have peace in His churches, certainly He would have nothing but peace in heaven!

**4. Satan's spirit in the air.** To say that men do evil on the earth because they "breathe in the spirit of Satan the Devil" is ridiculous. All men of the world breathe the same atmosphere—yet we have the good and the bad. **Whether a man does good or evil is his own responsibility, not the responsibility of the air he breathes or of a devil. It is a matter of self-control. The good and the evil are ever present. It is up to the man to make the right choice.**

**5. Satan's responsibility.** To say that this self-made devil or Satan is responsible for all the woes that ever were on the earth is to deny that man has the freedom of choice. **There is absolutely no Bible proof for such a statement. The men of the world do wickedly because they choose to do so and not because of a devil or Satan.**

The Jehovah's Witness concept of the devil assumes many other false doctrines to be true, such as, a literal garden of Eden, Adam and Eve being created perfect, death being caused by their sin, the establishment of the kingdom in 1914, to mention but a few. (These topics, not being related to the subject of the devil, are not explained here, but will be included in other lessons, some of which are already in print.)

**To be a messenger you must know the message.**

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## TEST YOURSELF

1. Where did the commonly accepted present-day concept of Satan originate?
2. What is "the devil" that has the "power of death" (Heb. 2:14)?
3. What was the serpent that tempted Eve?
4. What evidence have we that holy angels never rebelled against God?
5. Prove that Satan had nothing to do with the origin of pain and suffering.
6. What is the definition of "Satan"?

*Reprints of these studies are available upon request.*

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\*\* *Babylon the Great Has Fallen!* Watchtower and Tract Society. 1963.

# Devils Within

TO BE constantly on guard against "the wiles of the devil," the evil in our own hearts, requires effort. These "wiles" which may so easily deceive us, our own temptations, do not come to us ringing danger signals, but are hidden in the little things of daily life, the thoughts and feelings, the actions and reactions. They may be known only to ourselves. Careful self-examination is often necessary to reveal their hideous guise.

The following dissertation, written by a minister of the mid-nineteenth century, is an excellent description of the devil of the Bible—the sinful heart of man.

"We need a new theory of Satan, more profound and more penetrating than the old fables of nursery tradition; more in accordance with the spiritual insight gained under our Christian culture. This power of evil that besets us is a compound force of passion and materialism, selfishness and appetite, an unhallowed ambition and an unspiritual flesh, and is nonetheless fearful, but a much more terrible and cunning adversary than the old imagery represented it. The old imagery was but a shallow device, a very inadequate conception of devilish art, representing Satan as a hideous and repulsive figure, recognized by frightful marks, distorted features and a beastly foot to certify his tracks.

"Men would run from such ugliness by instinct. If this were the type of evil, it could never come near enough to tempt us. Our virtue would be safe against a seducer that inspired nothing but disgust.

"It is all right to personify the forces of sin and the seductive influences of temptation under the term 'Satan' as long as we know what we mean by the term. We must understand that this kingdom of darkness and the prince of it, this 'devil and his angels,' are all carried about within the unholy heart. This is the real Satan, one of shrewder cunning, more subtle diplomacy, more crafty disguise. Whatever he [Satan] may have been to the superstitious fears of other ages, the tempter of the nineteenth century takes on the address of a courtier, the self-possession of a man of the world, the royal dignity of a prince, the beauty of a seraph,

and the manners of a gentleman. If you meet him now, and meet him you will tomorrow or even today, you will not recognize him. It is his policy to steal upon us by degrees, little by little, and by roundabout approaches, until we are taken in his net.

"Men do not set up an atrocious aim before their own eyes, and move straight towards it. They partly conceal the wrong purpose, even from self. They must first deceive the breast that harbors their bad intentions. They must tamper a little with their own conscience, and half-convince themselves that the evil can bear some favorable construction. The kingdom of iniquity would never make its way in the world one inch farther forward if the wrongdoers that swell its ranks did not first deceive themselves. Men do not plunge into infamy for infamy's sake. They must have a pretext, and go sideways to destruction. We are not a race of diabolic fiends, seeking death; but we are a race of assailable and tempted mortals, turned away from God by careless yieldings.

"The peculiarity of temptation is the indirectness of it, the circumventing policy by which it conducts us to the shoals of shame and into a vortex of tempests, while we are all the while flattering ourselves that we are making a prosperous voyage. Whatever wrong a man is about to do, he does not go about it as being wrong; he tries first to give it some color of right. He covers it with some pretext or apology to make it tolerable to his better self. By a succession of such artifices he is led on step by step and little by little, to degrees of sin which would have shocked him if he had seen their full enormity from the beginning.

"Few men follow sin as sin; fewer still leap into the depths of degradation or crime by one plunge. Rather, he is tempted down by a circuitous process, dragged down through a series of moral deviations, as by a winding staircase, and for want of a steady principle and an upward faith, he drops at last through the gyrations of his own self-deception into destruction." ●●



# CHRISTIAN YOUTH IN THESE TIMES

## How Cedars Grow

*"The righteous shall . . . grow like a cedar in Lebanon" (Psalm 92:12)*

HAVE YOU ever heard of the cedar tree?

I want each of you to go back in imagination with me to the most famous woodland-temple in the world, a grove of very ancient cedar trees at the foot of Jebel-el-Arz, the Cedar Mountain of Syria. Here in the green is a clump of giant trees, about four hundred in all, and in the purple and white colors above the trees and in the distance is a high mountain. The trees are cedars of Lebanon, probably the most noble trees in all the world—trees which the Bible calls "the trees of the Lord," a tree which in Jotham's parable is called "the king of trees."

Now there are forty-nine texts in the Bible which speak of the trees of the Lord, but we have time for only one of them. Here it is in Psalm 92:12, "The righteous shall . . . grow like a cedar in Lebanon." I like that text because it has the word "grow" in it. All of us are growing, both good and bad, and it is because I want you to grow aright that I am going to tell you how the cedar grows.

The cedar tree grows *down-right*. It sends its roots deep into

the earth and grips the great rocks. You will seldom see a cedar that has been struck down by the storms.

Did you know that the word "cedar" comes from a very old root word, and is the most typical of all trees because it is always well "rooted and grounded."

Now that is the way the Psalmist says the righteous grow. They grow downright. "Rooted in him" is a phrase which the apostle Paul uses. He himself was like a splendid cedar tree, and he would have us rooted in Christ, in His teachings, in His life; for, rooted in Him, then no storms of temptation, no sudden gusts of trouble can overthrow us, nothing "shall separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord."

Is it not sad to see a great tree torn up by the roots and lying on the ground? But is it not always sadder to see a man or woman, a boy or a girl cast down by evil? Why should any of us ever be uprooted if we have been planted where our thoughts and our affections and our wills can lay hold of the Saviour, who gives nourishment and life to us all as we "grow up in him."

The cedar trees grow *upright*. The cedar tree of Syria often reaches a height of eighty feet.

That is higher than a six-story building. In India, the cedar often grows to one hundred fifty feet, higher than the tower on most churches. And when it grows up in the midst of many other trees, it not only grows very tall but also very straight. Because it is such a tall and straight tree, the ancient merchants of Tyre and Sidon used the cedar for the masts of their ships. For this same reason the cedar was used for beams to support the ceiling in Solomon's magnificent temple at Jerusalem.

Now there are trees which sometimes do not grow upright, and they are a picture of a "wrong" life. What do you think "wrong" means? Literally, it is "wrung," and is therefore that which is crooked and twisted. It is lying. It is stealing. Surely, if we grow like the cedar, we will not be wrung from the straight and the true. We will be upright in all our ways. "Taking root downward," we shall "bear fruit upward."

The cedar tree also grows *out-right*. We read of the far-reaching cedars of Lebanon. Their huge trunks, from forty to fifty feet in circumference, send out great branches that cast cool shadows and fill the air with

their fragrant and healing balsam. A cedar tree is a beautiful type of a righteous life, a life that shelters, blesses, comforts, and refreshes.

This was the life of Christ. He came, not to be ministered unto, but to minister. For this reason, as well as others, he is called fourteen times in the New Testament "Jesus Christ the righteous." He also grew, as we are told in the Gospels, and we are told that He grew out-right: "Jesus increased in wisdom and stature." Let us grow as He grew, grow to heal and not to hurt, to save and to serve, so that our fathers and mothers, our sisters and brothers—all who come near us—will take delight in us. And then we shall glorify God also.

But there is still another way in which the cedar tree grows. It grows *on-right*. That is, the cedar does not decay. It is one of the trees of the wood which is almost indestructible. There are cedar trees in the Holy Land today that are thought by

some to be as old as Solomon, and perhaps older. To measure the age of a cedar, you must count by centuries, not by years.

And the righteous also grow *on-right*. For God will save them, and they shall live on and on forever and ever. The wicked will perish and die. "They are like the grass," says the Psalmist, in the seventh verse of our Psalm (92). "They shall be destroyed forever."

Let us look again into our Bible and read the verse which comes after our text in this Psalm. "Those that be planted in the house of the Lord shall flourish in the courts of our God." We may then be planted here just as the cedar trees are planted upon the sides of Lebanon. Then we can grow like beautiful trees of the Lord, as we grow right in every way—downright, up-right, out-right, and on-right—for isn't that how the cedar grows?

## For Young Thinkers

*Unscramble the name; then draw a line to connect the name and incident.*

- |                |   |             |   |
|----------------|---|-------------|---|
| 1. CANAH       | I was cast into a dungeon for prophesying Jerusalem's destruction, but a kind eunuch and thirty other men rescued me with a rope made of old rags.  | 5. RIJEHAME | I was called before the kings of Israel and Judah just before they went to battle. They wanted to hear the results of the coming battle. I prophesied that all the men of Israel would be scattered upon the mountains as sheep without a shepherd. |
| 2. ROJAMOB     | In my flight from my son who was trying to take my throne, I was cursed and mocked by a Benjamite.  | 6. VADID    | While I was king, several countries came up against me. I and my people sought the Lord and He promised that we would not have to fight, for it would be His battle. We went to watch the battle, singing and praising God for His mercy.           |
| 3. SHOJATHEPAH | When we destroyed Jericho, we were commanded not to take spoil, but I disobeyed and took some. Because of this, I and all that I had were destroyed.  |             |   |
| 4. AHICAMI     | I was one of the better kings of Judah who prospered greatly. I became so proud that I tried burning incense to the Lord which was done only by the priests. As a punishment I was stricken with leprosy. |             |   |

Key:

- |                    |                       |
|--------------------|-----------------------|
| 1. Joshua 7:18-26  | 4. II Chron. 18:6-16  |
| 2. I Kings 12:1-11 | 5. Jer. 38:1-13       |
| 3. II Chron. 20    | 6. II Sam. 16:5-7. 11 |



## Teddy Wanted to Be Rich



**T**EDDY whistled as he nailed a board on the playhouse he was building in the backyard for his 8-year-old sister Betty. He was working hard to finish it before suppertime.

"Teddy, will you please lend me 5 cents until Saturday?" asked Betty, as she came running.

Teddy straightened his manly 10-year-old shoulders and looked at his sister. "What do you want 5 cents for, Betty?" he asked.

"For the blind man around the corner. I feel so sorry for him."

"Nope," said Teddy with a grown-up air. "You're too tenderhearted, Betty. You'd give everything we own, if I'd let you."

"Oh, please, Teddy," pleaded Betty. "S'pose *you* were blind. . ."

"Well, I'm not; and if I'm going to be rich when I grow up, I've got to save my money *now*."

Betty choked back the tears and went into the house. She looked all around, wondering what she could give the blind man.

Suddenly she spied the cookie jar. She opened it. It was full, for Mother had just finished her baking.

"Mother," she called, "may I take some cookies to the blind man on the corner?"

"Certainly, dear," said Moth-

er from the dining room, "you may take some of each kind."

"Maybe he has a little girl like me," said Betty aloud, as she whisked out the front door with a bag full of cookies.

At suppertime Betty told how glad the blind man was to get the cookies. "And Daddy," she exclaimed, "he has a little girl 8 years old—just as old as I am—and someone told him that his little girl is beautiful—and then he cried and said, 'And to think, I can never *see* my beautiful little daughter!' And sometimes she is hungry, he told me, and cold. But she is so brave, and how she cheers her poor blind father!"

"You know, Daddy," continued Betty, "Teddy wouldn't even lend me 5 cents, to give to the poor man!"

Teddy's cheeks burned, and he was ashamed to look at Daddy.

"I fear my boy will be a miser when he grows up," said Daddy, looking very serious.

"What's a miser?" asked Teddy, setting down his glass so hard that he spilled some of the lemonade on the snowy-white tablecloth.

"A miser," said Daddy soberly, "is someone who loves money more than anything else in the world."

That night, Betty knelt at her bedside a long time. "Oh, please,

dear God," she prayed, "don't let Teddy be a miser when he grows up."

Teddy hurried through his prayer. Then he jumped up and picked up his little bank. Eagerly he counted his money. "I wish I had a whole lot more," he mused, as he rolled a bright new quarter back and forth on the dresser.

Suddenly he remembered what Daddy had said. He glanced around the room nervously, as if he thought someone was watching him. He quickly put his money back into the bank, turned off the light, and jumped into bed.

A few days later Mother was busy canning.

"Teddy!" she called from the kitchen window, "Will you please go to the store and buy a 50¢ bag of sugar for me?"

"Yes, Mother," answered Teddy.

The man at the store told him there was a special sale that day on sugar. It was only 46¢.

As Teddy started home, a bad thought came into his mind. "I believe I'll keep the 4¢," he said to himself. "Mother won't know the difference—and I'll be that much richer."

"Thank you, dear," said Mother when he brought the sugar in. "Here's a cookie. What would I



do without my big boy to help me?" and she smiled at him lovingly.

"You're welcome," said Teddy in a queer little voice, as he quickly ran out the door.

One night Daddy and Mother were going out to see a poor lady who was very sick. When they were almost ready to go, Daddy suddenly remembered that he had left his purse upstairs.

"Ted-boy," he called, "will you run upstairs and bring me a couple of dollars from my purse? It's in the top dresser drawer."

Joyfully Teddy ran up the stairs. He did love to do things for Daddy.

When he opened the purse, he noticed there were lots of nickels, dimes, and half-dollars in it. He took out the amount Daddy wanted, and went downstairs.

"Good-night!" called Daddy, as he and Mother drove away. "We'll be back early. Be good children, and scurry off to bed at eight o'clock."

When bedtime came, both children promptly went to their rooms.

Then Teddy began to think about Daddy's purse. "My Daddy has a *lot* of money!" he said to himself. "I believe he must have a *hundred dollars*. I guess I'll go and count it, and see how much he has—just for fun."

He stole noiselessly into Daddy's room. It was so much fun to count money—to stack the nickels, quarters, and half-dollars in separate little piles. He made leaning towers of the dimes.

"Daddy has so much change—if I took only *one* of each kind, I don't believe he'd ever miss it," he said to himself. "Guess I will. That'll help me get rich fast. Won't Daddy be surprised, one of these days, when he finds out I'm rich?"

Then naughty little Teddy put the quarters and dimes and nickels back into the purse—all except one of each kind—put out the light, and slipped quietly off to bed.

"Time for church, children," Mother called up the stairs the next Sunday morning. "Don't forget your collection money."

"I'm all ready," answered Betty, "and I'll bring a dime."

Teddy had just finished combing his hair. He slammed the comb down on the dresser. "Collection money!" he said crossly to himself. "I'll never get rich if I give my money away. I'm not going to take even a penny."

In church Teddy settled down in his seat beside his sister. The song was a pretty one and he sang lustily. Now the minister was announcing the subject of the sermon: "The Sin of Achan."

Teddy nudged Betty and whispered, "Who is Achan?"

"Don't know," she whispered back. Then her face brightened. "I think he's the man that *stole*."

Teddy felt uncomfortable for some reason. "The man that stole, the man that stole" kept going through his brain. His conscience would give him no rest.

The minister's text was Joshua 7. Teddy always liked to hear about the children of Israel—how they crossed the Red Sea and Pharaoh's host were drowned. Such thrilling experiences they had—but today. . . .

Now the minister was reading how the children of Israel were defeated in battle. Their leader Joshua, couldn't understand why they were not winning, so he inquired of the Lord.

The Lord told him that there was a thief among them. The soldiers were strictly commanded to *take nothing* belonging to their enemies, and one of them had disobeyed.

Joshua conducted an investigation. He had to do a lot of searching before Achan admitted he had stolen. Teddy squirmed in his seat. How very uncomfortable he felt!

The minister was reading, "And Achan answered Joshua, Indeed I have sinned against the Lord God of Israel. When I saw among the spoils a goodly Babylonish garment and two hundred shekels of silver, and a wedge of gold of fifty shekels weight, then I coveted them. . . . They are hid in the midst of my tent."

Teddy swallowed hard as he thought, "Well, I didn't steal all that, but I took some of my father's money and four cents of Mother's."

The minister read on, how that Achan and all that he had was destroyed at the commandment of the Lord to blot out the sin from Israel.

Poor Teddy! Was the sermon especially for him?

And then the collection plate was passed, and Teddy had nothing to put in. His little sister looked at him accusingly.

"O God," he prayed in his heart, "I'm nothing but the stingiest miser in the world—and a thief beside."

Teddy had nothing to say, as he trudged home beside Daddy after church. He told Mother he didn't want any dinner.

He went to his room and knelt down beside his bed. He thought of all the mean and selfish things he had done.

"How bad I am!" he cried. "I thought it would make me happy, to get all the money I could; but the more I get, the worse I feel."

After dinner, Daddy and Mother softly tiptoed into Teddy's room.

(Continued on page 24)

## Begotten of God By Faith

(Continued from page 6)

obedience by the things which He suffered, and so must we. This knowledge of God has to be carried out in our daily lives until we die to sin and rule the thoughts of our minds.

Jesus, when twelve years old, had to surrender His own will. He had accompanied His parents to attend the Passover Feast at Jerusalem. While there He made His way to the temple and engaged the doctors of the law in conversation, asking and answering questions, and they were astonished at His understanding. He thought it was time to be about His Father's business, to go out and teach His heavenly Father's will to others. But no! His own work with Himself had to be accomplished first, as Isaiah foretold of Him: "Butter and honey shall he eat, that he may know to refuse the evil and choose the good" (7:14-15). He had to learn obedience by the things which he suffered (Heb. 5:8-9).

First John 5:6 closes with, "It is the Spirit that beareth witness, because the Spirit is truth." When

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*We each must die to sin ourselves. "Let not sin . . . reign in your mortal body."*

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Jesus said in John 6:53, "Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of man, and drink his blood, ye have no life in you," the people murmured and said: "How can this man give us his flesh to eat?" And many even of His disciples said, "This is a hard saying: who can hear it?" But He said to them, "It is the spirit that quickeneth; the flesh profiteth nothing: the words that I speak unto you, they are spirit, and they are life" (v. 63). His Word is the spirit, as John confirms: "the spirit is truth." And as we have seen, this spirit, this Word of truth, bears witness to the fact that Jesus came by water and by blood; He came learning His Father's law and sacrificing His will to that of His Father.

### Three That Bear Record

First John 5:7 reads: "For there are three that bear record in heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Spirit: and these three are one."

Trinitarians grasp at this text as a last straw to support their doctrine because no other Scripture in all the Bible lends such credence to the pagan doctrine of a triune God. But it is declared on the

best of authority that verse 7 does not occur in any of the best manuscripts.

Wilson's *Emphatic Diaglott*, a word-for-word translation from the Greek, omits the testimony of the three witnesses in heaven (v. 7), and comments: "This text concerning the heavenly witnesses is not contained in any Greek manuscript which was written earlier than the fifth century. It is not cited by any of the Ecclesiastical writers; nor by any of the early Latin fathers, even when the subjects upon which they treat would naturally have led them to appeal to its authority. It is therefore evidently spurious; and was first cited (though not as it now reads) by Virgilius Tapsensis, a Latin writer of no credit, in the latter end of the fifth century."

The verse has been deleted from the newer versions such as Moffatt, Goodspeed, the RSV, the NEB, and others. Translators of these versions also point out that the words do not occur in any of the best Greek manuscripts.

In the comment on v. 7, *The Interpreter's Bible* has the following: "This verse in the KJV is to be rejected (with RSV). It appears in no ancient Greek manuscripts nor is it cited by any Greek father; of all the versions only the Latin contained it, and even this in none of its most ancient sources . . . The mention in the true text (v. 8) of the *three witnesses* which *agree* naturally led to an interpretation along trinitarian lines, and this occasioned the present gloss which appears in various forms in MSS and quotations from the fifth century on."

As worded in the NEB, verses 6-8 read: "This is he who came with water and blood: Jesus Christ. He came, not by water alone, but by water and blood; and there is the Spirit to bear witness, because the Spirit is truth. For there are three witnesses, the Spirit, the water, and the blood, and these three are in agreement."

Let us analyze verse 8: "And there are three that bear witness in earth." We are interested to learn about these three that bear witness in earth, "the spirit,"—notice it does not say Holy Spirit, that power of God which came down from heaven; it is the spirit of truth, the spirit that Jesus tells us of in John 6:63: "the words that I speak unto you, they are spirit, and they are life." This is the Spirit we have on earth, the Spirit of truth; we have it with us today: this blessed Word of God preserved for us all through the ages of darkness.

So there are three that bear witness on earth, "the spirit, and the water, and the blood. . . ." The water signifies that there must be a cleansing accomplished; "and the blood," a dying to sin as Christ died to sin, "crucified with Christ" (Gal. 2:20). It is for us to crucify the flesh with its affec-

tions and lusts, thus killing out the "old man"—"and these three agree in one." We have these three now: God's spirit or truth; the water of life or cleansing medium; and the example of Jesus' death to sin. And these all agree as one—as one person? No! No! As one *record*.

We read in verse 9: "If we receive the witness of men, the witness of God is greater: for this is the witness of God which he hath testified of his Son." Yes, the witness of God surpasses the most valid witness of men; and this witness which God gave of His Son He revealed in His written Word, the Bible, which shines as a light amid the darkness of man's vain reasonings.

### Believing God's Witness

Verse 10 reads: "He that believeth on the Son of God hath the witness in himself: he that believeth not God hath made him a liar; because he believeth not the record that God gave of his Son." If we refuse to believe this record God gave, this system of divine truth, we make God a liar.

For further thought about this witness let us read Romans 8:16: "The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God." In apostolic times the Holy Spirit bore witness of their adoption into the family of God. What spirit do we now have to bear witness? Let us quote again John 6:63: "The words that I speak unto you, they are spirit and they are life." This is the Spirit that bears witness with our spirit today, that we are the children of God; that is, we can hold the law in one hand and our soul in the other, in that way determining where we stand, whether or not we are a child of God.

"The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God: and if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ; if so be that we suffer with him, that we may be also glorified together" (Rom. 8:16-17). Yes, *if*—"if so be that we suffer with him." We can never be glorified together and live with Him and become heirs with Him of the promises unless we suffer with Him *now* by dying to sin, crucifying the flesh, putting away all evil and every besetment of the human mind.

### The Promise—Eternal Life

"And this is the record, that God hath given to us eternal life"—many religious teachers stop here. I once read the words of a Baptist minister in New York City, who said we *now* have eternal life. But let us see how God has given us eternal life. "And this is the record, that God hath given to us eternal life, and this life is in his Son" (I John 5:11). That does not sound as though we had it in our posses-

sion now. How do we have it? By promise. "And this is the promise that he hath promised us, even eternal life" (I John 2:25). It is the promise we are given now. How could we poor, frail, dying creatures think we have eternal life now? No, we have only the promise. "And this is the promise that he hath promised us, even eternal life," and this life is in His Son.

Let us read I John 5:12: "He that hath the Son hath life; and he that hath not the Son of God hath not life." To have the Son is to accept His authority. If we thus do, we will have eternal life—but how? By promise. "These things have I written unto you that believe on the name of the Son of God; that ye may know that ye have eternal life, and that ye may believe on the name of the Son of God" (v. 13). Now read this verse with the qualifying term given above; that ye may know that ye have the *promise* of eternal life, "and that ye may believe on the name of the Son of God." What is His name: "His name is called The Word of God" (Rev. 19:13), and we must believe on this name or Word of God if we would know we have the promise of eternal life.

"And this is the confidence that we have in him, that, if we ask anything according to his will, he heareth us" (I John 5:14). Notice the qualification: "if we ask anything according to his will." It is important that we learn how to pray, and not try to tell the Lord what to do. If I ask to go to heaven at death, is that according to His will? No, for in John 13:33, Jesus said: "Little children, yet a little while I am with you. Ye shall seek me: and as I said unto the Jews, Whither I go, ye cannot come; so now I say to you." If we do not pray as God directs, our position will be as described in Prov. 28:9: "He that turneth away his ear from hearing the law, even his prayer shall be abomination." We have to listen to God's Word and pray according to His will, paying the more earnest heed to the things which we have heard lest at any time we should let them slip, if we expect God to hear our prayer.

"And if we know that he hear us, whatsoever we ask, we know that we have the petitions that we desired of him" (v. 15). We will ask only for that which is right, and we can be confident we will receive what is good for us. We will not ask God to forgive a sin we have not repented of, for "He that covereth his sins shall not prosper: but whoso confesseth and forsaketh them shall have mercy" (Prov. 28:13). We must *confess* and *for-sake* before we can ask God to pardon.

The Apostle closes his chapter with a final word of confidence: "We know that we are of God, and the whole world lieth in wickedness" (v. 19). Our hope rests squarely on fact. We know Christ has

come and left us an example; we know He is coming a second time; and we know that we can someday be made like Him if we follow His holy example. Knowing all this, let us not fail to heed John's final admonition: "Little children, keep yourselves from idols." With eternal life before us, how can we allow any interest or desire of this life to draw our attention away from the great things God has promised? ●●

## Teddy Wanted To Be Rich

(Continued from page 21)

"O Daddy, I'm a thief—and a miser!" he sobbed. "Well, well, come tell us all about it," said Daddy kindly, sitting down beside him.

Little by little, between sobs, Teddy told about the sugar money, Daddy's change and all the wrong and stingy things he had done.

"O Daddy, do you think you and Mother can love me any more, now? And do you suppose such a thief as I am could ever be made good again?" sobbed Teddy.

"Oh, certainly you can be good, my boy. The Bible says, 'Let him that stole, steal no more.' That's the way to settle your troubles. My son, the only right way is to work and earn your money honestly. The prisons and penitentiaries are full of people who are not honest. No doubt many of them started to take things which didn't belong to them when young as you are."

"Teddy, my dear," said his Mother, slipping her arm around him. "It's not great to be a millionaire. The money of the world is perishable. We want to gain the enduring riches that God has promised. If we serve Him faithfully now, He will give us the wealth of the world, when Jesus comes to set up His Kingdom."

As Teddy looked up and saw his little sister Betty standing in the doorway wiping the tears from her eyes, he stood up with a determined look in his eyes, "I'm never, never, never going to steal another cent as long as I live. And I'm not going to be stingy any more either." ●●

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*Let the dawn of morning be to you as the beginning of life, and every setting sun be to you as its close; then let every one of these short lives leave its sure record of some kindly thing done for others and some good done for God and some heavenly strength or knowledge gained for yourself.*

## LETTERS

### Dead to Sin

Romans 6:7 says, "He that is dead is freed from sin." The death of the old man of the flesh makes such a mighty change that it cuts off all correspondence with sin.

A man that is dead is uninfluenced and unaffected by the world's affairs. He is insensible to sounds and tastes and pleasures. The thing that once stirred within him at the approach of temptation has been "crucified and destroyed," and he is dead to all but holiness and usefulness to God.

Rochester, N. Y.

W. S.

### An Opportunity

I just received the new *Megiddo Message* today, and want to let you know how pleased I am with it. I am enjoying it very much. Also I want to thank you for the opportunity to spread truths about Christ.

Celina, Ohio

J. S.

### No Superstar

I would like to commend you on your fine article in the November issue of the *Megiddo Message* under "Timely Topics," entitled "Jesus Christ Superstar."

I have always been against this type of thing. Our Saviour should not be used as a tool for making money. He is to be a light to the world, not held up to ridicule.

I would also like to say that I enjoy and agree with most of your writings. I enjoy receiving your magazine.

Hammond, Indiana

H. H.

### Something to Live By

I want to thank you for your religious magazine devoted to the cause of Christ, published for the dissemination of Bible truth. I want to know all I can about the Bible and live by it as long as I live. Reading things like that is better than taking up our time reading newspapers and other things that are not worthwhile.

Danielsville, Georgia

A. D.

### Learning

Let me know when to reorder this magazine to keep it coming. I learn more every time I get one.

Miami, Florida

J. G.

### Time to Exit

Hour by hour we should be making great haste in our exodus from Babylon, that great City of Confusion. The Revelator, looking through prophetic eyes, saw the fate of our sin-torn world and warned: "Fallen, fallen is Babylon the great! She has become a haunt of devils, a prison for every unclean spirit, and a cage for every foul and hateful bird" (Rev. 18:2, Phillips).

Kansas City, Missouri

J. E.



# QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

**"How can anyone read the Bible and not come to the conclusion that Christ's death on the cross paid the debt for our sins? That is the reason God sent Him down into the world, to save us from our sins. And all we have to do is to believe in Him."**

We should let Jesus speak for Himself. Pilate asked Him, "Art thou a king?" And to this inquiry Jesus answered, "To this end was I born, and for this cause came I into the world" (John 18:37). Jesus was born to be a King, not a scapegoat.

Peter declared that Jesus came showing us an example that we should follow His steps (I Pet. 2:21). Jesus did not take all the steps for us, but showed us how to take the steps for ourselves. It is for us to follow in His footprints. He Himself witnessed: "Not every one that saith to me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven" (Matt. 7:21). He that *doeth the will of the Father* shall enter the Kingdom.

It is essential that we believe in Him, but bland belief is valueless. "Faith without works is dead," says James 2:20. Jesus said, "Whosoever heareth these sayings of mine, and doeth them, I will liken him unto a wise man, which built his house upon a rock" (Matt. 7:24). *Doing* must accompany hearing and believing.

John declared, "And every man that hath this hope in him purifieth himself, even as he [Christ] is pure" (I John 3:3). "The disciple is not above his master, . . . it is enough for the disciple that he be as his master" (Matt. 10:24-25). If the Master has done all the work leaving nothing for the disciple to do, then the disciple is above his Master, much above his Master.

**"I have heard some ministers and Bible students say that the book of Ecclesiastes (i. e., Eccl. 9:5, 10) cannot be used to prove that we do not go to heaven at death because the book is not authentic. They say that because Solomon describes his own waywardness in the book and admits that he is surveying only that which is 'under the sun,' the book does not reach high enough to include the thoughts of God. Please comment."**

The waywardness of the author in no way discredits the divinely inspired writings of the book of  
February, 1972

Ecclesiastes. No book of sacred Scripture can be laid aside with impunity.

More than once God has delivered His message to men by means of agents other than faithful stewards. For example, the dumb ass was used to reprove Balaam. An unscrupulous Joab spoke the word of truth to David when he had transgressed in numbering Israel (II Sam. 24:3). Even Paul did not condemn the words of those who preached the gospel with "contention, not sincerely, supposing to add affliction to my bonds" (Phil. 1:15-16).

The book of Ecclesiastes shows much evidence that its message extends beyond the region of knowledge that is "under the sun." For example, the last chapter foretells the coming Judgment, the separation of good and evil—an event that could be foreseen only through divine prophecy. Furthermore, the book contradicts the thoughts of the natural man, saying, "There is a just man that perisheth in his righteousness" (7:15). The book assures us that the Lord will requite evil with justice, that sentence against an evil work of wickedness will be executed.

If God allowed one spurious book to enter the Canon, how could we be sure that there are not more?

No, the Scriptures are the inspired Word of God (II Tim. 3:16), and a "thorough furnisher unto all good works."

**"You state that all who live in that new Kingdom must be changed physically, yet we read in Job that he would see God in his flesh. I have been taught that 'flesh and blood' means the wicked and their way of life, and that it is this class that cannot inherit the Kingdom. Perhaps you could enlighten me further."**

The statement is correct that all who live in the Kingdom of God must be changed physically. This is what Paul wrote in I Cor. 15:50: "This I say, brethren, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God." However, I see no Biblical basis for your thought that flesh and blood means the "wicked and their way of life." Most certainly the unregenerated "old man" of the flesh cannot inherit the Kingdom (see I Cor. 6:9-10), but it is equally true that physical flesh and blood cannot enter. Flesh and blood is corruptible, however righteous the character, and nothing corruptible shall be part of that eternal Kingdom. When Job wrote, "Yet in my flesh shall I see God" (Job 19:26), he was merely expressing his belief in the physical resurrection of the body. And he did not refer to the great God Himself, but was saying that he would see his Redeemer, Christ, as a living being●

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## Meditations On the Word

(Continued from page 27)

A good life is a matter of choice. It is possible to drift into evil but never can we drift into goodness. Goodness is always the result of choosing the best that one knows, and heeding the best counsel and instruction obtainable. It is never the result of going with the multitude or following the line of least resistance.

Man is naturally possessed of evil tendencies and these will lead him downward and away from God if not restrained. In most cases the tendency is to do as one pleases. This would be well if that inclination were to do good, but if it is for evil, then it is the worst that can be done. Giving way to these tendencies is like drifting with the current with no attempt to resist. It is the dead fish that drift with the current, whether at sea or in the river. Live

fish work their way against the current to their desired destination. It is required of us to choose our course and press against the natural tendency to do wrong.

In addition to these tendencies are the habits we form. We will have habits, either good or bad, but if we choose we can develop good habits that will help us greatly in living a godly life. In reality, the only safe way to overcome bad habits is to form good ones, firmly and securely, so that it will always be our choice to live right. The habit of drink can be overcome by resisting the temptation; by avoiding places where it is sold or used; and every time one can successfully say "No" to himself, the easier it is the next time. A bad temper likewise can be overcome. Be determined to rule your temper and not let it rule you. Every time it is restrained it becomes easier with the next test. And so with any habit or work of the flesh; it can be overcome by sincerely choosing the good.

The true Christian must choose. He must be the master of his own destiny, the builder of his own character. He must choose to think on the noble, the true, the right, the beautiful; for his thoughts are what will make or destroy him. Evil thoughts are one of the evils which Jesus mentioned that defile the man, and these must be replaced with good, clean thoughts. We may not be able to prevent thoughts entering our mind, but we can prevent them from remaining there and inciting us to evil. It is a well-known fact that we tend to become what we think about, what we cherish, and what we desire. If an individual indulges in unclean thoughts that person will be unclean spiritually, but if he chooses to have the words of God his delight so that they are his meditation all the day, then his heart will be filled with motives and desires that are good and uplifting, which will be a blessing to himself and others.

Choosing life calls for self-denial. The things we must refrain from choosing may not always be wrong and sinful in themselves, yet they might not be the best for us. Our time is limited and we must beware how we spend it. Our chief work must be our Father's business and our choice must be the things that will be best for our spiritual growth. Also we must refuse certain things for the sake of our example to others. That which may be lawful for us may cause another to transgress.

Finally, if we choose good and live as God has directed, He will guide and guard us through these perilous times till we have worked ourselves over to His standard. He will then choose us for His eternal associates. He will bless us with life, power and honor. ●●



ONE OF the grandest attributes of the Almighty is that He makes man a free moral agent and allows him to choose his own course in life. It has not been the will of God to compel men to serve Him during this period of almost six thousand years of probation. He has wisely declared His purpose, first through His angels, then through the words of the prophets, Jesus, and the apostles, and gives man the privilege to choose. The choice is not for this present life alone, for we already possess that—although the more uprightly we live now, the more we enjoy life—and death will come to all in this mortal state, whether bad or good. The choice is for the future. Eternal life is the promise for choosing the good and being obedient, and death for disobedience.

We do not get this eternal life just as soon as we make up our mind that we desire it, nor do we receive it when our short span of life ends in death, as so many erroneously believe. After we make our choice there is the necessity of carrying our undertaking to a successful finish, and to this end God gives us the opportunity to work out our own salvation (Phil. 2:12). Numerous trials are necessary to test our faith, our loyalty, our endurance. Then, after a successful life of good living, and at the appearing of Christ, "the chief Shepherd" (I Pet. 5:4), we shall receive life.

Mankind have been taught, together with the theory that the good go to their reward at death, that evil men are condemned to eternal torment or remorse. But our text conveys the idea that death is the penalty for sin or disobedience to God's law. The apostle Paul confirmed this when he wrote, "The wages of sin is death" (Rom. 6:23). Jesus Himself, the great Teacher foretold by Moses, declared in His Sermon on the Mount that

*"See, I have set before thee this day life and good, and death and evil; . . . therefore choose life that both thou and thy seed may live"*  
—Deuteronomy 30:15, 19.

the broad way wherein the many walk, leads to "destruction,"—death, annihilation—whereas the strait and narrow way leads to life, although only a few will choose to walk in it.

It is not so much the case of mankind deliberately choosing death as that they refuse to choose the good and thus fail to secure life. This is clearly illustrated in Prov. 1:24, 28-29, "Because I have called, and ye refused; I have stretched out my hand, and no man regarded; . . . Then shall they call upon me, but I will not answer; they shall seek me early, but shall not find me: for that they hated knowledge, and did not choose the fear of the Lord." The narrow way calls for discipline, faith and endurance, and this is contrary to the likings of the natural mind. However, God in His mercy pleads with man to choose the way that leads to life. He is not in any way obligated to man and does not owe man anything, but He has bountifully provided for man's necessities and offers him life beyond this present existence of sorrows if he will only choose to serve Him in "sincerity and truth."

We read of Moses that he chose "rather to suffer affliction with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season" (Heb. 11:25). Joshua, Moses' successor, when placing the choice before the children of Israel, firmly stated that he was going to serve the Lord, rather than the gods of the nations around them (Josh. 24:14). Jesus, our great Example, from early childhood had to learn to refuse the evil and choose the good, and Paul suffered the loss of all things that he might prove worthy of the future glory. These were faithful to their choice; but there were many who, after making the choice to serve God, grew weary in well doing and forsook their only chance of life.

(Continued on page 26)

*Maranatha--word of greeting  
Passed between the saints of old;  
Let our lips repeat when meeting,  
Heirs of glory must be told--  
Maranatha--Maranatha--  
Jesus comes, ye saints behold!*

*Maranatha--word of promise  
To the faithful and the true;  
Precious parting words of Jesus,  
"I will come again to you."  
Maranatha--Maranatha--  
Soon His glory we shall view.*

*Maranatha--word of gladness,  
Cheering star of hope is this;  
Smiling through the rifts of sadness,  
Till the cloudless dawn of bliss.  
Maranatha--Maranatha--  
Shine thou blessed star of peace.*

*Maranatha--this our anchor,  
Safely cast within the veil;  
Winds and waves may rage with anger,  
As across life's sea we sail;  
Maranatha--Maranatha--  
Lo: the haven fair we hail.*

*Oh: 'tis true our Lord is coming,  
Surely, quickly He will come;  
As we muse, this word we're humming--  
Heedless we no longer roam.  
Maranatha--Maranatha--  
Come, Lord Jesus, claim Thine own!*

*"Maranatha"*

*"Our Lord cometh..." I Corinthians 16:22*

