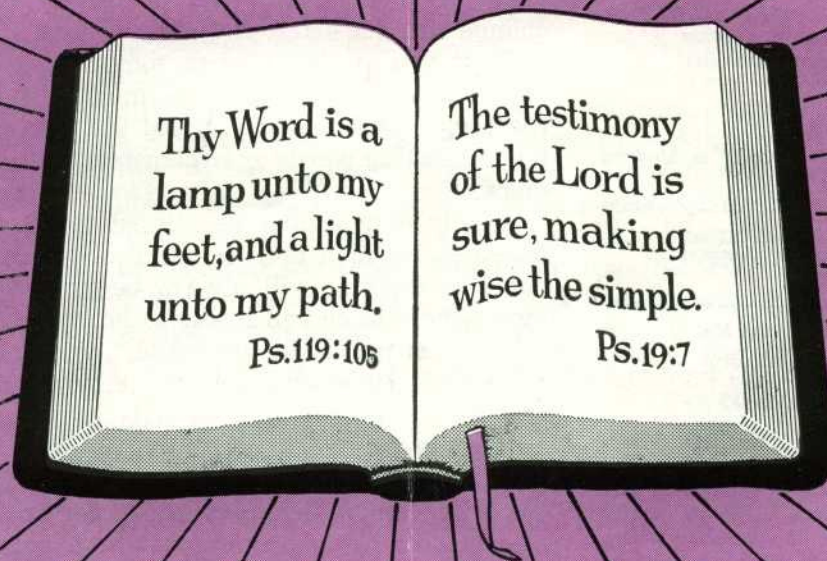


Megiddo Message

DEVOTED TO THE CAUSE OF CHRIST



Comparative or Superlative?

Beyond the Expressible
Devils that Tempt
Behold He Cometh!

Comparative or Superlative?

OUR English language is filled with comparatives and superlatives. We use them all the time as we convey our thoughts and opinions to one another. One tree is *tall*; another is *taller*, and that is the comparative. Another is the *tallest* among all the trees being judged, and that is the superlative. We talk about a *good* idea; another idea is *better*, but there is always the *best*, and that is the superlative; it is beyond the realm of comparison.

Comparing can be a divine art. To be able to judge between right and wrong, between good and evil, between the things of God and the things of the world, we must learn to compare. But more often than not, our comparing is on a human level, and it is carnal, "of the earth, earthy." When Paul told us to "compare spiritual things with spiritual," he was telling us to exercise our powers of discernment; this is necessary and proper. But the type of comparing we are more likely to practice is that which Paul wrote about in his Second Epistle to the Corinthians: "For we dare not make ourselves of the number, or compare ourselves with some that commend themselves: but they measuring themselves by themselves, and comparing themselves among themselves are not wise. . . . For not he that commendeth himself is approved, but whom the Lord commendeth" (II Cor. 10:12, 18).

Comparing is as natural and as instinctive as breathing. We see it in our children. "Susie has a bigger sand box than mine." Or, "Bobby has a *new* bicycle. Mine is old and broken." School days bring more comparing. "Sally made a higher mark than I did." Teenagers are still comparing, but no more than people in their twenties, forties, sixties, and seventies. We compare our material prosperity and feel dissatisfied. We check the year and make of our cars. We estimate the financial status of others. We compare our backgrounds and advantages, our talents and our accomplishments. We might be happy with what we have, except that we look around and see others who have more. And so it goes on and on. And all the time we are so busy craning our necks to see what someone else has and what we are lacking by compari-

son that we forget the one standard of comparison allowed us: Christ.

It is strange that we earthborns are so prone to strive against each other. To be a little better than someone else, or a little higher in the social strata, or a little wiser in some field of knowledge, seems to be the height of our low ambition. The desire is insatiable, and keeps us forever comparing ourselves with someone else, when we should be pressing toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus.

Why Compare?

By our constant comparing on a human level, we are usually seeking one of two things: consolation or exaltation. If we have not attained, we naturally want to be consoled. And if we have attained, we want exaltation. It is the spirit of the child who fails the examination at school. "If I'd had a different teacher . . . if the questions hadn't been too hard . . . if I hadn't been sick so much," and on and on come the excuses. "Besides all that," he may say, "I wasn't the *only* one who didn't pass." What a consolation!

But let us look closely at ourselves. How many times have we tried to get consolation from the fact that we are not too much worse than some around us? But consider how worthless will be all such consolation when we stand before the Judgment seat of Christ and are face to face with the true record of our lives, and all our unforsaken pride and foolish pretense. What comfortless consolation then to be able to point to the brother who stands beside us and say, "But I did better than he!"

Our comparing may also be prompted by an inner desire for recognition when we have attained. It is the type of comparing done by the school child who says proudly, "We had an exam today, and I made a hundred!" He is seeking praise, for if everyone in the class had "made a hundred," he would not have bothered to mention it.

Seeking Recognition

We each have an inborn desire to be seen, to be

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Editorially Speaking . . .

"Love Is Not Provoked"

THE word "provoke" means to stir up, to arouse. It may be used in a good sense, but it is rarely used this way. Generally it refers to the act of disturbing people by some real or supposed affront.

We have all noticed how quickly some people excuse themselves for some outburst of temper or ill feeling by letting us know they were provoked to it. More than likely we have done it ourselves. Someone else said or did something that was totally uncalled for; thus we lay our own wrongdoing on others. What we overlook in this simple act of self-justification is that no provocation, however severe, can stir up what is not there. Someone else may have misjudged our intentions, or accused us falsely, or criticized unnecessarily; but what they say can never *add* anything to the human heart; it merely brings out what is already present. It does not change the character; it simply *reveals* it.

What you and I do when something or someone provokes us is what we really are. The mud must be at the bottom of the pool or it cannot be stirred up. You cannot roil pure water. Provoking words or circumstances do not *create* the moral muck; they bring it to the surface. No more.

A holy man cannot be stirred to do anything unholy. A pure-hearted man may be assailed by any of several stimuli, but his response will always be pure because his heart is pure—there is no evil inside to be revealed.

"Love is not easily provoked," wrote Paul, and the word "easily" is generally thought to have been added. "Love is not provoked," say the majority of translations. Some substitute the thought of irritation for the provoking, making it read, "Love is not irritable." But the thought is the same, for one who cannot be provoked is not irritable either. Being provoked or being irritable are both incompatible with love, for if we have perfect love we cannot be stirred to any unloving word or act. Love can never disclose anything but true love. Christ was tempted, but He could not be persuaded to do wrong. He could not be stirred to evil because there was no evil in Him to stir. The tempter's efforts were wasted. Jesus' was pure love.

It may bring some kind of cheap consolation when we have lost our patience or let ourselves go in a display of bad disposition to believe that we were provoked to it by the act of another; but if we value our prospect of life eternal we will not thus excuse ourselves. Honesty will compel us to face the fact that we have the bad disposition and that what we called a "provocation" was a God-sent opportunity for us to learn self-control. If we fail, the fault is all our own, not that of the person or the circumstance that stirred us.

Before the pool can be muddied, the muck must be at the bottom. It is our job to get rid of the muck. ●●

admired, to be recognized. We would be willing to do most anything if we could be seen and admired for it. (Someone has suggested that we would even be willing to be burned at the stake, if only we could have a good crowd to see us well done.) We think in terms of the comparative, and forget the superlative, the eternal recognition which comes from God.

Jesus warned against this type of comparing when He said, "How can ye believe, which receive honour one of another, and seek not the honour that cometh from God only?" (John 5:44). In other words, how can you, who are receiving honor from one another (the comparative) at the same time seek the honor that comes from God only (the superlative)? It is impossible, for you cannot serve God *and* mammon. When you work for the recognition of the one, you sever yourself from the other.

The true Church is not and never has been an admiration society. We are not living and working to be seen of each other; nor are we working for the plaudits of the world around us. We are living and working toward that future time when "each of us will get his meed of praise from God" (I Cor. 4:5, Moffatt). Now is not the time for reward and recognition; that day is future. Now is our time for work and improvement, for mental and moral growth and development. We are not here to do the heroic or the fascinating; our task is that of self-crucifixion, putting to death every way and thought of ours that conflicts with the higher purposes of God into which we have been called. Our objective now is not to be recognized but to merit the recognition of God.

Looking Outward and Inward

Human comparing leads to another temptation: we may become so concerned about analyzing the weaknesses and failings of others that we forget our own. We tend to look outward instead of inward.

This problem is not new with our age. Travel back to that certain morning by the Sea of Galilee after Jesus' resurrection. Jesus had served breakfast to the seven disciples there on the shore, when He took Peter aside for a private conference. Jesus told Peter of the work he had yet to do, and His final admonition was a direct command: "Follow me."

But Peter was not satisfied simply to know about his own duty and the nature of his own responsibility. His thoughts kept traveling to others. He looked up and saw John, the "beloved disciple," coming toward them. Immediately came the question: "Lord, and what shall this man do?"

There it is, the old human art of comparing. Can we see it in ourselves, the spirit that is ever ready to respond to the call of duty with, "Lord, what should my brother do?"

Jesus' reply to Peter was a stern rebuke. "If I will that he tarry till I come, what is that to thee? Follow thou me." In other words, You mind your own business, Peter. *You* see to it that *Peter* is taken care of, and *John* will take care of *John*." Peter's responsibility was Peter, not John.

The big fisherman needed this rebuke, and so do we need it today. It is so easy to be concerned about what other people are or are not doing, and to forget our own obligations to God. Strong in all of us is the tendency to watch the other fellow, and compare ourselves with him, our work with his work, our advantages with his advantages, our talent with his talent. It is a common temptation, and a destructive habit. So many of the temptations that plague us—envy, discontent, resentment, discouragement, self-pity, sensitiveness—grow and flourish in the soil of human comparing. It is wrong. And we as Christians must dispense with it, remembering that all that we have—however much or little—belongs to God.

Comparing, A Sign of Ingratitude

Since we are indebted to God for all we have and are, we show ourselves ungrateful when we compare ourselves among ourselves. We are not here to strive against one another; we are not here to compare material gains and losses. God has blessing enough for all, and to spare. He is our portion and our inheritance. He is our shield, our defender, and our defense. He is our exceeding great reward, our treasure, our pleasure, our delight. Whatever He sees fit to allow us to enjoy, we should be grateful; whatever we lack, we should likewise thank Him for, knowing that He in His infinite wisdom is permitting us what is best.

This was the Psalmist's solace when he thought of the prosperity of those who persecuted him. Hounded, hunted and harassed, he still could meditate on the law of his God and grow as a tree planted by the river of water. Why? Because he looked beyond the comparative to the superlative future blessing God was offering.

The great reward God has promised for faithful service does not depend upon our success in this world. Notice the lessons in the Sermon on the Mount. The blessing promised is not one long life of pleasure in this world; it is not some accomplishment which the world calls success. It is not how much we own or how much knowledge or

responsibility we may have. Forget the comparative. God's blessing is superlative, beyond comparison—even "exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think" (Eph. 3:20). And it is reserved for the "poor in spirit," the "meek," the "merciful," the "pure in heart," those who are "persecuted for righteousness' sake," and those who are true "peacemakers." None of these qualities are achieved by carnal comparing.

The Pharisee and the Publican

Illegal comparing is among the lessons in Jesus' parable of the Pharisee and the Publican. In our self-approving, we are like the Pharisee. We compare our character and our acts of service with those of another, and we look good. We can find in almost anyone some point of comparison to feed our self-esteem. But what about our standard? It is human. It is earthly. It is false. Comparison of this type may be flattering, but it adds nothing to our standing in the sight of God; the very fact that we do it proclaims our weakness.

In the parable of the Pharisee and the Publican, Jesus allows us to overhear the prayers of two men. The characters are partly fictitious, but both live on every busy street. One of them may even bear our own name. We must never forget to look to ourselves.

By his prayer, each man described himself. The Pharisee was righteous according to common standards, at least according to his own. He even did more than duty required. He imposed disciplines on himself above the law's requirements. The tax collector was a crook, by his own acknowledgment, "a sinner." And his confession was sincere. It was the expression of a heart determined to change. Jesus accented the characters to teach the lesson.

So each man told what he thought of himself. "God, I thank thee, that I am not as other men are..." Here is the comparative, real as life itself. The Pharisee's key word is "I." He professed to be thanking God, but actually his thoughts were on himself. He cited his righteousness and his uprightness in comparison to that of other men; in fact, that was the message of his prayer. His center was himself. The publican simply asked God for mercy. The center of his prayer was God. He was looking to a power which He knew to be higher than himself, and which demanded more than he had been giving. He was humble, repentant, dissatisfied with himself as he was. The Pharisee exalted himself by condemning others, when he should have felt as he looked at the less

fortunate publican, "There, but for the grace of God, go I." The Pharisee could have had rightly-deserved credit, had he been of a lowly mind, had he not stood up and told God that he was ready and waiting for well-deserved honors. But by his comparing he missed God's blessing for what he *had* done.

The lesson is for us: Do we in our secret thoughts set up our own standards for comparison and revel in our own self-satisfaction? Do we think ourselves worthy of God's recognition because we are "better" than someone else? Are we guilty of comparing ourselves among ourselves, forgetting the superlative which God has set before us? Let us be careful, for God will not be mocked. Whatever we have sown, we shall reap. If we play the part of the complacent Pharisee, we shall have his reward. If we measure our progress in the spiritual life by comparing it with the poor achievements of someone else, we shall miss the "prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus."

The Comparing Laborers

There is yet another of Jesus' parables which illustrates the tendency of human nature to compare. It is the parable of the Laborers in the Vineyard. Jesus said, "The kingdom of heaven is like unto a man that is an householder, which went out early in the morning to hire labourers into the vineyard." Each laborer agreed with his employer for a certain amount of pay, represented by the "penny," which he would receive at the close of the day. Later in the day the householder hired more laborers. At the close of the day he told his steward to begin paying those that came last and proceed to the first. The steward obeyed, and all received a penny (see Matthew 20).

But immediately those who had worked all day fell to comparing, for "they also received a penny." They "murmured against the goodman of the house." They complained that they had worked through the whole day, bearing the burden and the heat, and therefore should have received more than those who came later. It was as though they said, "We've been sacrificing for you all this time, and don't you think we deserve something extra for it?"

But the price was exactly what had been agreed, and so was the pay. The "goodman of the house" was right; the comparers were wrong. They would have been satisfied, except that those who came later received the same "right" pay. And their comparing bred feelings of resentment.

Resentment is the natural outgrowth of carnal comparing. And when there is resentment, there is no room for repentance. And where there is no repentance, there is no spiritual growth or enlargement. That is why Paul wrote, "Let there be no more bitter resentment [and therefore no carnal comparing], no more shouting or slander, and let there be no bad feeling of any kind among you. Be kind to each other, be compassionate. Be as ready to forgive others as God for Christ's sake has forgiven you" (Eph. 4:31-32, Phillips).

If we live in the comparative and judge ourselves by ourselves, we become complex and critical. We find it easy to report on the deficiencies of others, even delighting in it. We have a large file marked "human failures." But none of our own are listed; ours are under a milder, less-condemning heading.

Let us beware. This same unhappy result of comparing is projected by James: "Who is a wise

Leave the carnal of the comparative and go on to the superlative.

man and endued with knowledge among you? let him show out of a good conversation [his manner of daily living], his works with meekness of wisdom. But if ye have bitter envyings and strife in your heart [the result of comparing], glory not, and lie not against the truth. This wisdom descendeth not from above, but is earthly, sensual, devilish. For where envying and strife is [there would be no envy and strife if we didn't engage in carnal comparing], there is confusion and every evil work" (Jas. 3:13-16). How much of God's blessing, how much peace and happiness even in this life we miss by our constant comparing!

God has no use for egocentrics. He does not want us always' looking out for ourselves with the constant attitude, "How does this affect me?" He wants men and women who can live and work together as humble, holy children of a heavenly Father, children whose one aim is to stir in each other a "response in love and good works," who "keep firm in the hope they profess" (Heb. 10:23-24, JB).

The Right Comparing

Paul set a definite restriction on our freedom of thought when he wrote that we "dare not . . . compare ourselves with some that commend themselves: but they measuring themselves by themselves, and comparing themselves among them-

selves, are not wise" (II Cor. 10:12). Making comparisons of this kind is definitely carnal. "For not he that commendeth himself is approved, but whom the Lord commendeth" (v. 18).

But Paul set a right example and a right standard which we must meet. Our one goal, he wrote, is that we "all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ" (Eph. 4:13). In other words, he is saying, We must not compare ourselves with ourselves or others, for all human measurements are faulty. We must leave the carnal of the comparative and go on to the superlative, even the "measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ."

What does this do for us? The first thing that it does for us is to show us that we are not as good as we would like to think we are. The "stature of Christ" is a standard of judgment so far above what we naturally are that it continually calls us upward. If we are satisfied with ourselves as we are, let us check our standard of measurement: We have not yet come to the "measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ" to be judged.

What we need is spiritual awakening and moral growth. Our striving should not be for the fleeting things of this world, its honors or attainments; nor should it be to surpass one another. Our striving must be to excel in virtue and godliness, in humility and love. We must "renounce the hidden things of dishonesty," and that renouncement must be genuine. For it is possible to divide the Word of God rightly, and yet there not be the cleavage of flesh and spirit in our own lives. It is possible to get a reputation for being sincere, and live a very shallow life. This is why carnal comparing is wrong. We must have but one standard: "the stature of the fulness of Christ."

If an eternal place in the Kingdom of God is our ultimate desire, we must let go the comparative. If we are tempted to strive for the top in the things of this world, we must let go. If we would mind high things, we must hear the word of the Lord and "condescend to men of low estate." It is the way to blessing. It is the way to happiness. It is the way to the everlasting Kingdom of God. God set up *the* standard, even "the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ," and Paul said, "I beseech you by the meekness and gentleness of Christ"—no place for carnal comparison here.

"Seekest thou great things for thyself? Seek them not" (Jer. 45:5). Remember, "God resisteth the proud, but giveth grace unto the humble," even the superlative—the "far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory."●●

Beyond the Expressible

IN that common tool called language we have a most remarkable and essential instrument for communicating ideas. The greatest thinkers of any age could never inspire us without the aid of vocabulary. And ours is abundant—the Webster's Unabridged Dictionary lists 550,000 words. Ours is a vocabulary capable of expressing almost anything the mind is capable of entertaining.

Almost, that is; for in our worship of God it often falls short. As we approach unto the Almighty and ponder the eternity He has set before us, there may rush up from the depths of our soul's feelings which all our wealth of words is not sufficient to express. Words become weak and totally incapable of relating what the heart hears and sees when dealing with Omnipotence.

It is not by accident that the writings of the holy men of old abound with exclamations. The dedicated Christian mind transcends the bondage of the earthly and touches upon the infinite and absolute. In such activity, language becomes inarticulate. That is why the apostle Paul exclaimed, "O the depths of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! how unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways past finding out" (Rom. 11:33). That rhapsody would be incomplete without the "Oh!" It is the fountain-like expression of the overflowing soul.

Prophets and poets of old found themselves frequently on the brink of the infinite gazing into the depths of a divinity that overwhelmed them and drew from their hearts such bursts of feeling as mere words cannot express. It is then that "Oh!" and "Ah!" come spontaneously, as when Jeremiah, upon hearing the voice of the Lord, responded, "Ah, Lord God! behold, I cannot speak: for I am a child"; or the prophet Ezekiel exclaimed, "O Lord God, thou knowest."

Theology has no "Oh!" It is cold, intellectual. Truth is warm, personal. It is the difference between knowing of God by hearsay or knowing Him by acquaintance; the difference between being a stranger outside His realm, or being a member of His family. And the difference is not merely verbal; it is real and serious and vital.

Theology may engage the mind, but truth moves the heart to respond to the touch of God, to the awareness of His greatness and His graciousness toward us. When our little minds begin to comprehend the wonder of His truth—awesome, vast, immutable, eternal—the heart can only cry out, "O Lord God, thou knowest!"

We should watch lest we lose this "Oh!" that comes from the devoted heart. There is real danger in falling victim to the

(Continued on page 24)

O worship the King
All glorious above,
And gratefully sing
His wonderful love;
Our Shield and Defender,
The Ancient of Days,
Pavilioned in splendor,
And girded with praise.

The earth with its stores
Of wonders untold,
Almighty, Thy pow'r
Hath founded of old;
Hath 'stablished it fast
By a changeless decree,
And round it hath cast
Like a mantle the sea.

Thy bountiful care
No tongue can recite!
It breathes in the air,
It shines in the light;
It streams from the hills,
It descends to the plain,
And sweetly distils
In the dew and the rain.

O measureless might,
Ineffable love!
While angels delight
To hymn Thee above,
The humbler creation,
Though feeble their lays,
With true adoration
Shall lisp to Thy praise.

Self-Denial Week

Sunday, February 2, will begin the annual observance of self-denial week by the members of the Megiddo Church and all others who may wish to observe it with us.

During this week we will limit ourselves to three articles of food at each meal. We shall make our selection from common foods, the selection being varied at each meal as desired. We shall refrain from all specialties, all cakes, cookies, pastries, and fancy foods. We shall think not so much of our tastes as of our need.

To eat to satisfaction of three articles of staple food can scarcely be termed a hardship. Yet it is a restriction which will be welcomed by all who seek self-mastery. It should also serve to remind us of our manifold blessings in a world where thousands are perishing from hunger each day.

The practice of self-denial is a Bible principle not to be confined to our choice of foods. Self-denial is the one means by which we may bring our thoughts and wills into subjection to the law of God. Self-denial is the key to self-control, the virtue by which we shall win the greatest conquest of which mankind is capable: *self-conquest*. ●●

Abib Is Coming...

The steady onward march of time is bringing us nearer and nearer to the beginning of another sacred New Year, Abib 1, which falls this year on April 12. It begins the evening of Friday, April 11, and ends the evening of Saturday, April 12, Bible days being measured from evening to evening (Lev. 23:32).

The ancient Hebrew calendar being based on the lunar cycle, the new year commences with the first new moon after the spring equinox. This year the equinox occurs on March 18, and the first new moon to follow is that of April 11.

The arrival of Abib means for the members of the Megiddo Church a double celebration—the recognition of another New Year, and the anniversary of the birth of our Coming King, Jesus Christ. Distant members, friends and visitors—plan to come and join us at this sacred season! ●●

- Give up grumbling...
instead... "in everything give thanks."
- Give up finding with other people...
instead... use that time to pray and meditate on God's Word.
- Give up finding fault with other people...
instead... be helpful, kind and encouraging.
- Give up speaking unkindly...
instead... let your speech be generous and understanding.
- Give up reading the newspaper...
instead... study your Bible.
- Give up hatred...
instead... learn to love.
- Give up fear...
instead... think faith.
- Give up your worries...
instead... trust God with them.
- Give up watching TV...
instead... get acquainted with someone in the Bible.
- Give up buying nonessentials...
instead... save your money for promoting God's work.
- Give up judging by appearances...
instead... learn to judge by the Word of God.
- Give up something you really want...
instead... do something for someone else.
- Give up thinking about yourself...
instead... think about God, His work and His plan.
- Give up longing for what you do not have...
instead... thank God for what you do have.
- Give up yourself... to God. ●●

Devils that Tempt

"THE devil made me do it." We have all heard it. How convenient to have a supernatural power on which to blame all our spiritual weakness and failure, all our troubles and difficulties!

Says a current periodical, "Satanic forces can move in on us like a flood, and can harass us to the point that life is almost unbearable. Usually the attack is against the mind. Satan will take human weaknesses like worry, fretting, complaining, suspicion, irritability, lust, and the spirit of revenge, jealousy, greed, contention, bigotry, prejudice, and hatred. He will intensify all of these things in us. He comes upon individuals through the demons to possess us."

The same periodical says further: "I know that all of this sounds weird. . . . It's hard to believe; it seems to come from another world. . . . Yet it is a phenomenon that is very real. . . . And Scripture says that demons are out to delude the world."*

Does the Scripture say this? Is our world filled with supernatural forces of evil that are waiting to tempt us?

We all agree that the forces of evil are present. Evil is everywhere. But it is here only because evil men and women are everywhere. Evil and sin are present in just the same way that love and goodness are present—both are intangible qualities and must be expressed by and in people themselves. If the world had no people, it would have no evil—and no love.

When we do wrong, what made us do it? The Bible gives us the answer: "Every man is tempted, when he is drawn away of his own lust, and enticed" (James 1:14).

We all are devils when we allow our naturally evil desires to govern us. We tempt ourselves by the thoughts we allow in our mind, by the evil which we allow our eyes and ears to relay to our inner understanding. We all have it in us to be devils, hence devils have been tempting men for a long time. Aspiring children of God were acquainted with them as far back as the time of Job.

Satan and Job

The presence of Satan in Job 1 is not definite proof that the Scriptures uphold the idea of an all-powerful being with powers for evil capable of subduing God's powers for good. Indeed, such a position, if it could be proved, would seriously discredit the Almighty's claim to absolute fairness, to "justice and judgment," as attributed by the Psalmist (Ps. 89:14).

Authorities on Scripture agree that Satan, as used in Job 1, should be a proper name, as "the Satan," hence "The Satan, the slanderer of man," *diabolis* (The Vulgate). In the margin of the Authorized Version of the Bible the word is rendered "the Adversary." Satan in Biblical usage denotes anyone in opposition to God; it is a Hebrew word "signifying an adversary, an enemy, an accuser."

We learn from the *Interpreter's Dictionary* that in the prologue to the book of Job (chs. 1, 2), a member of the "sons of God" who assails "the integrity of the pious man of Uz and receives permission from Yahweh to put it to the test is described as 'the satan.' Here the name means no more than 'the one who acts as accuser, or prosecuting attorney, on a given occasion.' It is not implied that this is his constant name or role, nor even that he is inherently evil."

In Job 1, the satan maliciously tries to withdraw God's approval from Job by attributing low motives to him. The terms employed are those commonly used in a court of law, Satan playing the role of "accuser" or "prosecuting attorney."

Knowing that in Bible phraseology the terms "satan" and "devil" are invariably applied to men and women who oppose God and disobey His law, we can the more easily understand the satan referred to in Job 1:6.

"There was a day when the sons of God came to present themselves before the Lord, and Satan came also among them." This Satan was a representative individual, a man, not a demon or a man possessed with a demon.

Just as Judas was among the apostles who gathered with Jesus at the Last Supper before His crucifixion, so Satan was among these sons of God,

* Billy Graham, "Did the Devil Make You Do It?" *Decision*, October, 1973, p. 13.

THEOLOGIAN WANTS DEVIL "DRIVEN OUT"

By George Cornell, AP Religion Writer

WITH the "devil" getting increased attention these days as part of a rash of interest in the occult, a Roman Catholic theologian suggests that Christianity eliminate from its teachings all ideas of a personal devil.

"True Christianity neither needs nor should it desire such a fallacious prop," says the Rev. Peter J. Riga of St. Mary's College, Moraga, California.

He says the concept served in ancient times to explain evil influences in the world, and also is used to symbolize that reality in the Bible, but that it makes for confused superstition in terms of modern understanding.

"As we move further into modern history, belief in a personal devil will only prove more and more of an embarrassment to true Christianity," he writes in the U. S. Catholic, published

in Chicago by the Clarentian Fathers.

Declaring that Christianity is "absolutely removed from all forms of magic and superstition," which are being generated by interest in the occult, he adds: "For that reason we ought to remove from Christianity every vestige of belief in devils—at least as truly personal entities.

"We may certainly keep the traditional language to express symbolically the reality of sin and evil, but in our catechesis [teaching] it ought to be understood as a symbol." Father Riga, a prolific author and lecturer, says that in many ways the idea of a personal devil nowadays can be damaging and, in a sense,

or servants of God (I John 3:2), who gathered in Job's day. Here is symbolized an ever-present truth: wherever God has servants, He also has enemies. The Bible speaks of Cain and Abel. Ten of the spies Moses sent to spy out the land of Canaan proved satans, adversaries to God's purpose, and they brought back an evil report, while only two brought back a favorable report. There were Elijah and Ahab, Samuel and Saul, King David and his erstwhile companion who at one time had been his guide and close acquaintance, but who became his archenemy. Of him David said: "We took sweet counsel together, and walked unto the house of God in company" (Ps. 55:12-14). Demas was even in the yoke with Paul, and then proved a traitor.

Wheat and tares grow together; sheep and goats share the same pastures; righteous and wicked attend the same meetings. It was true in Job's day, also in Jesus' day; and it is still true in our day. Wherever there are servants or sons of God, Satan, the adversary, is present.

It does not seem consistent with reason to suppose that the account in Job is a literal occurrence. It seems more fitting to view it as a poem, a parable, a story containing the highest moral. Twice in the book of Job it is stated that "Job continued his parable." It has been suggested that its purpose is to discuss the problem of life, and, in particular, to refute the popular idea that suffering is proof of sin; great suffering, of great sin.

To confirm our identification of Satan, let us not overlook the physical features of this Satan that was involved in the controversy about Job's sincerity. He appeared in person; he was able to converse with the Lord. He was a man; he could walk and talk. The devil of theology is not able to do all of these things.

The book of Job is part of the "wisdom" literature of the Bible, which includes Job, Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, and a part of the Psalms. If we approach the book of Job as parabolic, all the incongruities disappear. Job's boils and the potsherd with which he scraped himself are indicative of the evils of the flesh that defile us, and of the vital willingness on our part to be cleansed from them, whatever the process.

Satan, likewise, is representative. Our evil natures are always ready to discredit our brother on the grounds that his service for God is a shrewd bargain; that he serves for the temporal advantages he gains for so doing. And God, in His unimpeachable justice and fair dealing with His earthly children, is the Hero of the story.

Who Hardened Pharaoh's Heart?

The devil? a spirit of evil? or what?

Seven times we are told that the Lord hardened Pharaoh's heart, three times that he hardened his own heart. Once we are told that it was God's leniency that prompted him to harden his heart. Exodus 8:15 lists this once-mentioned instance:

contradicts basic Christian belief.

"It seems to serve as an escape from human responsibility by attributing our predicament to forces over which we have no control," he says. (There's a common phrase for it, "The devil made me do it.")

"This seems to contradict the more basic Christian teaching of man's freedom under the grace of God, whereby man can determine his own destiny, for better or worse . . ."

As for the account of Christ's threefold temptation by the "devil," Father Riga says scholars disagree about whether it involved a "personal entity called the 'devil,' or whether it is a story to 'emphasize the fact

that Christ was truly a man, tempted by the three fundamental lusts which afflict all men: material goods, self-esteem before men, power over others.' "

He says belief in a personal devil has "never officially been defined by the church" [the Roman Catholic], although the idea was used in the past to portray many afflictions now understood as having natural and psychic causes.

Although mysteries about the causes of evil and suffering "will always be with us," he says, "the traditional model used to help man understand these realities of mortal existence—the devil—is not culturally binding on us today in the name of Christian tradition or faith."

The Catholic priest writes also, "The wholesale revival of interest in the occult, of course, is a long way from Christian faith, which is absolutely removed from all forms of magic and superstition. For that reason, we ought to remove from Christianity every vestige of belief in devils—at least as truly personal entities—and the forms or rites of exorcism to drive out the devil. We may certainly keep the traditional language to express symbolically the reality of sin and evil, but . . . it ought to be understood as a symbol." He calls the modern belief in devils and demons a "residue of magic and superstition which still plagues us in our teaching about the devil and exorcism." ●●

"But when Pharaoh saw that there was respite, he hardened his heart, and hearkened not unto them: as the Lord had said." There is one text that specifically states that Pharaoh hardened his own heart; it is the word of the Philistine lords: "Wherefore then do ye harden your hearts, as the Egyptians and Pharaoh hardened their hearts? when he had wrought wonderfully among them" (I Sam. 6:6).

Pharaoh was a tool in performing the Lord's purpose, but his action was entirely of his own volition. Every man is a free moral agent, free to choose his own course of action. God has the power to foreknow what that action will be, and therefore He is able to fit that action into His overall divine plan.

Who Provoked David to Number Israel?

The Jehovah's Witnesses and others hold to the belief that the devil is a superbeing capable of provoking men to evil. However, such a theory cannot be the truth of the matter, for it flatly contradicts other plain Biblical statements.

If a superbeing called Satan stood up against Israel and provoked King David to number the people in defiance of God's orders, then Jesus told an untruth when He said that nothing from without entering into a man can defile him (Mark 7:18-23). And James also was mistaken when he said that "every man is tempted when he is drawn away of his own lust, and enticed," if a literal superpower-

ful devil can tempt men to do wrong.

To be sure, something provoked David to sin. Was it he himself, or some other individual? The King's order was abominable to Joab, the chief captain of the army, hence he could not have influenced David to take the census. And there is no record of any other person influencing the King. We will let David speak for himself: "Is it not I that commanded the people to be numbered? even I it is that have sinned and done evil indeed" (I Chron. 21:17).

It was David's own ungoverned pride that was the satan in the case; his own desire to know how great the nation under him had become, prompted him to number the people. "*Even I it is that have sinned.*" The satan who enticed David was a personification of his own human ego, his frailty and weakness.

Who Tempted Jesus?

The temptation of Jesus is frequently used to prove the certainty of the existence of a literal, personal devil. A moment's reflection, however, dissipates this impression. If Judas could be a devil, and yet be a man, why could not the tempter of Jesus be a man? His being called a devil proves nothing, for a devil in the person of Herod cast John the Baptist into prison. Devils in the Bible were men, not monsters or spirits or demons acting as God's counterpart.

(Continued on page 22)

The Ten Lepers Healed

--JESUS DID IT!

LEPROSY in Jesus' time was a dreadful disease (it still is). Shiny, white spots on the skin are one of the first things to be seen when a person contracts the disease. These spots gradually become worse and there is a growth of "quick raw flesh." Parts of the body actually decay and one by one the members of the body fall away. For centuries there was no known cure for leprosy, and the disease is very contagious.

In the days of Jesus, anyone who contracted the disease was sent outside the city. The lepers then often lived together in bands and begged for anything a passerby might throw to them. They were not allowed to approach a person who did not have the disease; and if anyone approached them, they called out "Unclean, unclean" as a warning. It was a miserable life these lepers led.

Outside a village on the border between Samaria and Galilee, a group of ten lepers lived. At least they had company and someone to talk to by living together, since they were not permitted to live with their own families. They managed to survive on the things the kindhearted passerby would toss to them. But they still wished for and talked about and longed for help, to be cleansed from their disease. There was little hope of this, however, since there was no known cure for leprosy.

One day they saw a stranger traveling along, coming in their direction. As he came nearer, someone recognized him as Jesus of Nazareth. They had overheard bits and pieces of conversation during the past months, and it seemed that Jesus could and did perform miracles. They wondered among themselves just what to do. Of course, they could not approach Him; that was forbidden. But they could go as close to Him as was allowed by the law so that He would be sure to hear them. There wasn't anything for them to lose, anyway. The very worst thing that could happen to them would be to be ignored and continue that sad and lonely life of a leper.

They stopped, then, as they approached Him, to keep the necessary distance separating them from the stranger, and called loudly, "Jesus, Master, have mercy on us." Jesus looked at them a moment. How sad and pitiful was the sight of these men. Then He gave a simple command: "Go, show yourselves unto the priests." The lepers wondered about this, but the priests were the only ones

who could declare them "clean" or free from the disease. They turned to do as they were told, and *as they went they were cleansed!* What a renewed feeling came over their bodies! Each of the ten lepers looked at his companions, and each could tell just at a glance that the others had been cleansed also. The white spots, the sores, they were all gone! What a feeling of happiness immediately filled their entire being as they hastened, faster than ever, to present themselves to the priests.

However, one of them stopped. He examined his skin and could hardly believe his eyes. It was completely normal and healthy. He felt better, too, better than he had felt for years. He turned, and saw his nine companions hurrying away as fast as they could go in the direction of the village. No, he couldn't, simply couldn't join them. He felt a deep and intense gratitude within himself. He had to go back and thank the Master.

When he reached Jesus, he fell down at His feet, voicing his thanks over and over again. Jesus looked at the one lone man and said, "Were there not ten cleansed? but where are the nine?"

Thanksgiving, or gratitude, is a virtue that is not practiced enough today, even by Christians. No doubt the nine lepers who were cleansed were grateful, but they did not take the time to thank Him who had given them their health again.

What of us? Do we voice our gratitude to our many friends and benefactors for the kindnesses they have shown us? Probably not as we should.

Let us learn this lesson from this miracle of the ten lepers. Let us be like that one leper, and take the time to voice our thanks to our friends and acquaintances who have shown us kindness. Above all, let us remember our Creator and not forget to thank Him daily for the many blessings He has bestowed upon us. ●●

A Lesson from Little Ones

The parents of an eight-year-old boy had been teaching him to be more thoughtful and considerate of weaknesses and errors which should be corrected, particularly in relation to his three-year-old brother Carl. The boy apparently recognized the problem. He prayed, "And God, help me not to get all upset when I don't get my own way, and help me not to get mad when I can't be the first, and help me not to pester Carl because he's too little for that kind of stuff."

That's getting down to the realities of life, isn't it? ●●

UNDERSTANDING THE BIBLE

"Study to shew thyself approved unto God."

World Religions

REGARDLESS of where or when they have lived, men of all races have differed little in their religious aspirations. Through religion they have sought for favor, for comfort, for guidance, for help, for courage in the hour of danger and for life beyond that which is known to mortals. Unlike all other animals, man is a "creature who comprehends things he cannot see and believes in things he cannot comprehend." In seeking the things he cannot comprehend, he turns to religion.

The god to whom a man turns and the means he uses to reach his god in the hope of receiving favor is determined by his religious background. The Muslim prostrates himself toward Mecca five times daily. The Buddhist sits cross-legged on the floor for hours, his eyes fixed on a single object, seeking enlightenment; the Hindu bows at the feet of one of many gods seeking union with Brahma, the "one supreme being" of the Hindu faith; the Christian prays to God, the Almighty Creator, and strives to emulate His Son Jesus Christ.

Are all these that seek a higher power, even though they know not what, God-seekers? Does God Almighty hear the prayer of the Muslim, the prayer of the Hindu and the prayer of the Christian alike? Does it matter to Him who or what they worship, or how they worship? Do all religions lead to the same God?

We are content that all religious faiths do **not** lead to the one true God. Israel was strictly commanded to "put difference between holy and unholy, and between unclean and clean," and to "take forth the precious from the vile" (Lev. 10:10; Jer. 15:19). God further commanded them concerning pagan gods: If any of your family "or your dearest friend should entice you secretly to go and worship other gods—gods whom neither you nor your fathers have known, gods of the people round about you, near or far, at one end of the land or the other

—then you shall not consent or listen" (Deut. 13: 6-8, NEB).

Israel had to learn what was clean and what was unclean, what was holy and what was unholy, what was to be worshiped and what was not. God would not tolerate any recognition of the gods of the nations around them. Any commingling with those who worshiped foreign gods was likewise forbidden.

In those days, God was dealing directly with His people, sending His angels to deliver His Word. Are we to believe that He would speak a different message if He were to speak today? Granted, humans have become more tolerant, but God does not and will not change. "I am the Lord, I change not," were His words through the prophet Malachi (3:6).

In our first lesson on world religions we covered briefly the changed situation in our own country which has led to the influx of Eastern religions. A contemporary writer pinpoints the cause: "The theological thinking of the past seventy years has been dominated by the spirit of relativism. This view . . . professes to find elements similar to Christianity in the various great ethnic faiths. Its tendency is more and more to refuse to speak in absolutes, denying the uniqueness of Christianity, and Christ and thus to put the birth, life and death of Jesus Christ on a general par with the experience of other great and good men."

Such relativism has undermined the faith of many, and fostered the growth of non-Christian religions in our country. Industrialization has also played a part in the spread of Eastern thought throughout the world. In an industrialized world, material goods are important, but they have been over-emphasized and have become the god of many, while the true God has been given second place.

Easterners in our country have not been unmindful of the changed attitudes of America and have taken advantage of the fertile missionary field. This, too, has contributed to the rapid growth of the Eastern faiths in the West.

There is a great gulf between Eastern and West-

ern faiths. Eastern religions teach that truth is to be found by each individual in his own mind, while Christianity holds that truth is found only in the Word of God, His Word being a direct revelation through His prophets and His Son, Jesus Christ. Christianity is not just a collection of the ideas of men, but it is founded in the plan of God which was delivered to men and preserved for us in His written Word.

II. HINDUISM (cont'd)

It is no exaggeration to say, that for the Hindu, Brahman is everything. He is the absolute, not only the creator, but the created. Hindus believe that Brahman is not only the author, but also the subject of their "Hymn of Creation," from which we quote a few lines:

"At that time there was neither nonexistence nor existence; neither the worlds nor the sky, nor anything that is beyond. What covered everything, and where, and for whose enjoyment? Was there water, unfathomable and deep? Death was not there, nor immortality; no knowing of night or day. That one Thing breathed without air, by its own strength; apart from it, nothing existed. Darkness there was, wrapped in yet more darkness. . . . That One Thing became creative by the power of its own contemplation. There came upon it, at first, desire which was the prime seed of the mind, and men of vision searching in their heart with their intellect, found the link to the existent in the nonexistent. . . . Where this creation came from, whether one supported it or not, He who was supervising it from the highest heaven, He indeed knows; or He knows not!"

Such philosophy is both confusing and contradictory, but it is from such writings that the Hindu student learns. Compare this with the clear and concise declarations of the Word of God: "I am the Lord, and there is none else. . . . I have made the earth, and created man upon it: I, even my hands, have stretched out the heavens, and all their host have I commanded" (Isa. 45:6, 12). **There is no ambiguity in the Word of God; it is both definite and decisive, leaving no room for doubt in the mind of the reader as to who is the Creator.**

B. Hindu Beliefs vs. the Scriptures

For devout Hindus, there is an appropriate "mantra" from some volume of their writings to be recited on every conceivable occasion. A "mantra" is not exactly a prayer, but it is a call for a particular deity's power. It is to be repeated over a hundred times, or even a thousand times—

and more, and in this repetition the worshiper seeks to identify himself with the deity and believes this will bring him to his aid. Among these "mantras" are prayers for the dead, used to expedite the rebirth of their relatives. Charms, sacrifices, and spells, still form part of the Hindu ritual.

For the Christian, there is one book, the Bible. Prayers are not to be addressed to a variety of deities, but to the one and only God through His Son Jesus Christ, who told us: "When ye pray, use not vain repetitions, as the heathen do: for they think that they shall be heard for their much speaking. Be not ye therefore like unto them: . . . but thou, when thou prayest, . . . pray to thy Father which is in secret" (Matt. 6:6-8).

1. The aim of life. The Christian's hope of salvation is not something ethereal; it is not a dream world or castles in the air. But it is the hope of a real, literal, tangible Kingdom to be established on the earth, a kingdom for which he is commanded to pray (Matt. 6:9). It is not to be gained by "quiet resignation," but we are exhorted to "strive to enter in at the strait gate" to "press for the prize," to "work out [our] own salvation," to "do his commandments," to "prepare to meet [our] God," to "fight the good fight of faith," to "study to show [ourselves] approved." And this list is not complete; **but it suggests activity, both physical and mental. The Scriptures do not teach that anything is to be gained by putting the mind out of gear or assuming a comatose or apathetic attitude. Every man shall be judged and rewarded according to his own works (Matt. 16:27).**

2. The transmigration of souls. Hinduism can offer nothing as evidence that souls actually do migrate, that they are transferred successively from one creature to another. The Christian has a real prospect of life beyond death through a physical resurrection of the body. And he has evidence—absolute proof—in the resurrection of Christ. The belief in future life is the central point of our faith; for "if in this life only we have hope in Christ, we are of all men most miserable" (I Cor. 15:19). Paul labored that he might "by any means . . . attain unto the resurrection of the dead" (Phil. 3:11). **Reincarnation is an idea of men, for which there is no evidence.**

3. Brahman and other gods. There is but one Eternal, Everlasting God. He is infinite, having no rivals and no equal. In contrast, how finite are the gods of men. All that the pagans venerate as gods have died—or they are images which were never alive! But the one true God is a living Being, the Creator of all things. The world is not an extension of

Himself but visible evidence of His handiwork. "I have made the earth, and created man upon it. . . . I am God, and there is none else" (Isa. 45:12, 22).

4. The caste system. The true God recognizes no caste system. Race, station or color do not enter into His judgment of a man, but "in every nation he that feareth him, and worketh righteousness, is accepted with him." And in the "new man, which is renewed in knowledge after the image" of the Creator, "there is neither Greek nor Jew, . . . bond nor free," but all are one in Christ (Acts 10:35; Col. 3:10-11).

Hinduism lies entirely outside the Bible. It was in existence when the Bible was being written, but exerted no influence upon its sacred writing. God commanded His people to have no part with any other religion or foreign gods, "for all that they do for their gods is hateful and abominable to the Lord" (Deut. 12:30, NEB). This was the attitude of the Lord, and it should be our attitude also.

III. BUDDHISM

Buddhism is what the name would imply: the teachings of one called the "Buddha." Buddha is a title, not a name, a Sanskrit word meaning "the enlightened one."

Circumstances surrounding the early life of the founder of Buddhism are shrouded with myths and legends. However, it is believed that he was born about 560 B. C. in northern India, the son of a wealthy land owner, a Hindu of the upper caste. Because of his father's wealth, in his early years he led a protected life of luxury. It is said that as a youth he was prevented from witnessing that which is common to all mortals—sickness, old age and death. But learning the sad facts of reality in his mid-twenties, he left home in search of the answer to suffering and death.

His search lasted seven years. During this time he became a wandering hermit, subjecting himself to extreme self-denial, fasting nearly to the point of starvation, seeking enlightenment. His enlightenment is said to have come at the end of a long period of meditation under a "Bodhi" tree. In his own words, "Then did I become certain that I had attained to the full knowledge of the highest wisdom in heaven or earth. I was sure that my mind was freed for ever. This was my last existence; there would be no rebirth for me."

After his "enlightenment," Gautama, the Buddha, started out preaching his new-found wisdom. He preached for more than forty years before his death and during that time attracted many followers. Chinese scholars, hearing of the new faith,

made their way to India and took the new religion back with them to China, which resulted in its spread throughout that land. Now, some 25 centuries after its founding, Buddhism in varied forms is the principal religion of much of the Far East (excluding India, its birthplace, where it is nearly non-existent), having about as many adherents as Hinduism.

Because it contains ethical standards that were lacking in its parent Hinduism, Buddhism has had a certain civilizing effect on the countries that have adopted it.

A. Principal Beliefs of Buddhism

Buddhism is said to have been a sort of Protestant-type revolt against Hinduism, and just as the Protestants retained many of the beliefs of the mother church, so the Buddha retained many of the beliefs of Hinduism. The Buddha's "enlightenment" was definitely influenced by his Hindu background. Foremost in his teaching was how to escape from the endless cycle of re-birth.

1. The "Four Noble Truths." The Buddha viewed all life as suffering or unhappiness, and the "truths" he discovered in his meditation reflect this view. The "Four Noble Truths" form the root of Buddhism and consist of the truth that pain exists; the truth of the cause of pain, which he saw as desire; the truth that pain or suffering can be ended; and the means by which it can be ended.

2. The "Noble Eightfold Path." This "Path" forms the means by which pain or suffering can be ended, according to Buddhism. It is sometimes spoken of as the "Middle Way," the way between two extremes. The Buddhist is required to learn and live these eight right ways, "indeed, not for one life, but many lives may have to be lived before the seeker qualifies for entry into Nirvana."

3. Nirvana, the goal or state toward which a Buddhist strives, is somewhat of a mystery. It is described only negatively, unlike anything that we know as existence, yet it is neither non-existence or annihilation. What is it? Some describe it as a state of "positive content," a state of inner peace that comes with the elimination of desire. It can also be defined as "impersonal ultimate reality." Most men are said to require myriad lives to achieve Nirvana. Only a few souls, such as the Buddha himself, become sufficiently pure to attain Nirvana in a few lives.

4. The transmigration of souls. The Buddha carried this doctrine over from Hinduism. He not only believed in the endless cycle of rebirth, but he developed around it a complicated theory. Buddhist teaching states that rebirth can take place in five

different states: 1) in hell, where there are eight hot hells and eight cold hells; 2) as an animal; 3) as a ghost; 4) as a human; 5) as a god. Where the soul goes and how long it stays there is determined by one's life.

5. The Ascetics, yellow-robed monks. Buddhism is characterized by its yellow-robed monks, devout followers who beg for their living on the city streets. The dictionary defines an **ascetic** as "one who renounces social life and comforts for solitude, self-mortification, and religious devotion; a hermit or recluse." Buddhism teaches that this is the ideal way to live, in solitude, separated from the things of the world. Boys of devout Buddhist families learn these religious ideals at an early age.

6. Buddhist writings and gods. Buddhist literature that has been ascribed to the founder and translated into Chinese amounts to more than a thousand volumes. Just how much of these writings are actually his words and how much is legendary is difficult to determine. Gautama, the founder of Buddhism, is what we call an agnostic. He said he did not know whether or not God existed, therefore, he concluded that a man must depend upon no one but himself.

The Buddha rejected the Hindu gods as well as God Almighty, but after his death the gods which he had exiled came crowding in until they were legion. Even the Buddha himself was soon worshiped.

B. Buddhism vs. the Scriptures

On the surface, there appears to be much that is morally of merit in the original teachings of the Buddha. But one thing stands out as lacking: There was no place in it for God. Moral precepts are not enough; there must be something or Someone to stand behind those precepts.

Buddha's teaching in general is a pessimistic one, similar in many respects to its Hindu parent. In the words of one writer, his teaching might be summed up thus: "All life involves suffering; therefore the way to lessen suffering is to lessen life; and the only way by which to lessen life and reach nirvana is to get rid of all desire. This is the same as the outlook of Hinduism: 'Life can't be mended, so it might as well be ended.' "

Compare this to the positive and optimistic tone of Jesus' teaching. Wherein lies the difference? Jesus believed in and preached a loving heavenly Father, a God who has a plan and a purpose for men, a hope that made life worth living. Jesus believed and taught that life was worth living and that it could be made better. It is the difference between a religion which believes in a personal

God; a religion that sets a value on human personality; and a religion which believes in no god at all and regards human personality as of little or no value.

1. The transmigration of souls. Like Hinduism, Buddhism can offer no proof that souls exist or that souls pass from one being to another. This whole doctrine is founded on a false premise, that of the immortality of the soul. No evidence has ever been produced to show that man possesses a soul that is separate from the body, an immortal part that survives the death of the body. Remove the foundation of the immortal soul concept, and the doctrine falls of its own weight. **We repeat: the only hope of a future life lies in the resurrection of the body at the second coming of Christ. Reincarnation, an endless cycle of re-birth, is a product of the minds of men and without evidence, either scientific or Biblical.**

2. Nirvana, that elusive, indescribable state toward which men's souls migrate, has no more foundation than the doctrine of the immortal soul on which it leans. It is likewise the product of men's minds, and without proof. **Life beyond this life can come only through a resurrection of the body.** What is a soul or spirit without a body? No more than a puff of wind! **After His resurrection, Jesus invited His disciples to touch Him, to take note of His hands and feet, "for a spirit hath not flesh and bones, as ye see me have" (Luke 24: 38-40). He was a living being, not a spirit (or apparition). They gave him food to eat and He ate before them. Our hope is in such a resurrection, not in a fanciful mental state.**

3. Buddhist writings and gods. The writings attributed to the Buddha contain many illustrative stories that explain his doctrines, but they cannot be compared to the parables of Jesus. In some of them, judgment for the sinner is pictured as cruel and inhuman.

Buddhism in its original form left no place for a god. For Buddha, neither the true God or the Hindu gods had any value. He said they were powerless to help. Because of this, some have claimed that the original Buddhism was not a religion at all. Things changed after his death, and his followers worshiped him as a deity. Huge images in the form of a meditating Buddha are to be found in all Buddhist temples and monasteries, placed to watch over those who assemble beneath them. Relics of Guatama's remains are also worshiped and are housed in sacred shrines throughout the Far East.

Reprints of these studies are available upon request.

BEHOLD HE COMETH!

The kingdoms of the earth go by
In purple and in gold;
They rise, they triumph, and they die,
And all their tale is told.

One Kingdom only is divine,
One banner triumphs high;
It is the Kingdom of the Lord—
And it is drawing nigh!

THE New Testament is filled with words of expectancy, words of urgency, words that call for intense action. "Watch! Pray! Seek! Repent! Go! Tell!"

What is the reason? Why this intense spirit among the early Christians? What in their lives was so stirring, so vitalizing?

It was the message they were bearing to the world, the message of the coming King of kings. "Behold he cometh. . . ." It was the message the angels had given to the watching disciples the day Jesus ascended into heaven. They had been walking with Him when suddenly "he was parted from them" and "a cloud received him out of their sight."

"And while they were gazing after Him into heaven, two men dressed in white suddenly stood beside them, and said to them, 'Men of Galilee, why do you stand looking up into heaven? This very Jesus who has been taken up from you into heaven will come back in just the way you have seen Him go up into heaven' " (Acts 1:10-11, Williams).

All through the Bible the promise is repeated and confirmed. It is "that day," "the day," the "last day," the "great day," the day when Christ shall return to earth.

"For I know whom I have believed," said Paul, "and am persuaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed unto him against *that day*" (II Tim. 1:12).

"Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge shall give me *at that day*: and not to me only, but unto all them also that love his appearing" (II Tim. 4:8).

"The Lord grant unto him that he may find mercy of the Lord *in that day*" (II Tim. 1:18).

Again in the book of Hebrews: "Let us consider one another, . . . not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, . . . but exhorting one another:

and so much the more, as ye see *the day* approaching" (Heb. 10:24-25).

"The night is far spent, *the day* is at hand" (Rom. 13:12). It is "the day," the day of the coming again of our Lord to earth.

The second advent of Christ has been the sustaining hope of God's people through the ages. It is the central theme of poets, prophets and apostles. Often their message was related to conditions then present; many prophecies were short-ranged; but always there was the greater, longer-ranged significance which permitted men to think beyond the limits of the world they could see to the Day when God's plan would be culminated on earth.

We find prophecies of Christ's second advent and the work He will perform in the Old Testament and in the New Testament.

Isaiah tells us that the Lord "will come with strong hand, and his arm shall rule for him." He will "come with fire, and with his chariots like a whirlwind, to render his anger [judgment] with fury, and his rebuke with flames of fire" (Isa. 40:10; 66:16-17).

Jeremiah tells how God will raise up a "righteous Branch, and a King" which will "reign and prosper, and . . . execute judgment and justice in the earth" (Jer. 23:5).

Ezekiel says Jerusalem will be in an overturned, unsettled condition "until he come whose right it is: and I will give it him" (Ezek. 21:27).

Daniel foresaw in vision the time when the "kingdom and dominion, and the greatness of the kingdom under the whole heaven shall be given to the people of the saints of the most High, whose kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, and all dominions shall serve and obey him" (Dan. 7:27). He knew also of the time when the days of the kingdoms of men should be accomplished and "the God of heaven" should set up "a kingdom, which shall never be destroyed" (Dan. 2:44).

Hosea saw in prophetic vision the number of the children of spiritual Israel "as the sand of the sea, which cannot be measured nor numbered," people of whom it shall be said, "Ye are the sons of the living God." He tells of the day when men shall "seek the Lord their God, and David their king [Christ, the greater Son of David]; and shall fear the Lord and his goodness in the latter days" (Hos. 1:10-11; 3:5).

Joel describes how the Lord "shall roar out of Zion, and utter his voice from Jerusalem; and the heavens and the earth shall shake: but the Lord will be the hope of his people" (Joel 3:16-17). It is the day when there will be "multitudes, multitudes in the valley of decision" (Joel 3:14).

Obadiah prophesied of the calamity which would befall the nation of Edom but climaxed his message with a far-sighted vision of the great triumphant day when "the kingdom shall be the Lord's (Obadiah 21).

Micah tells of the time when "the law shall go forth of Zion, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem." He announces the end of all war, for Christ will have returned and will be reigning supreme. For He shall "judge among many people, and rebuke strong nations afar off; and they shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruninghooks; nation shall not lift up a sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more. But they shall sit every man under his vine and under his fig tree; and none shall make them afraid" (Mic. 4:2-4).

Nahum saw in vision the Lord having His way "in the whirlwind and in the storm," a description of His judgments upon the earth at the time of His second advent. He speaks also of the mountains quaking and the hills melting at the sight of His presence (Nah. 1:3-6).

Habakkuk assures us that though "the vision is yet for an appointed time," it is surely coming; for "at the end it shall speak, and not lie: though it tarry, wait for it; because it will surely come, it will not tarry" (Hab. 2:2-3).

Zephaniah warns of "the great day of the Lord," the day which "is near, and hasteth greatly," the day when God will make His people "a name and a praise among all people of the earth," and "thou shalt not see evil any more" (Zeph. 1:14; 3:9, 15, 20).

Haggai foresaw a mighty shaking among all nations when "the desire of all nations shall come; and I will fill this house with glory, saith the Lord of hosts" (Hag. 2:7).

Zechariah gives us a picture of the Lord coming "and all his saints with [Him]," when His feet shall

stand on the Mount of Olives, and the mountain shall divide, and "the Lord shall be king over all the earth: in that day shall there be one Lord, and his name one" (Zech. 14:4-5, 9).

Malachi closes the Old Testament with the promise of the coming of Him who "shall sit as a refiner and purifier of silver," who will take swift action against all workers of iniquity." He speaks also of "the Sun of righteousness" which shall arise with healing for all men, and then concludes his message by announcing the work of Christ's herald, Elijah the prophet (Mal. 3:2-3; 4:2, 5-6).

The New Testament continues the theme of Christ's return. In **Matthew**, Christ is the bridegroom who comes to receive His bride. In **Mark** He is the "certain man" who "planted a vineyard, and . . . let it out to husbandmen, and went into a far country," and who came again at the appointed time. In **Luke** He is the "nobleman" going into a "far country to receive for himself a kingdom, and to return" (Matt. 25; Mark 12:1-10; Luke 19:11-21).

The Gospel of **John** records the words of Jesus Himself: "I will come again" (John 14:1-3).

The book of the **Acts of the Apostles** tells how the apostles went everywhere proclaiming the message of Christ—who lived, died, and was resurrected, ascended to heaven and is coming again in like manner as He went away (Acts 1:3-11).

In the book of **Romans** Paul tells of the "day when God shall judge the secrets of men by Jesus Christ" (Rom. 2:16). He confirms this fact by quoting the prophet who said, "There shall come out of Sion the Deliverer" (Rom. 11:26).

To the **Corinthian** brethren Paul wrote of Christ who was the "firstfruits," that is, the first to be resurrected, judged and rewarded with immortality; then follows the promise to every true believer: "But every man in his own order: Christ the firstfruits; afterward they that are Christ's at his coming" (I Cor. 15:23).

To the **Ephesians** Paul wrote of the day when God will send Christ who shall "gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven, and which are on earth" (Eph. 1:10).

In **Philippians** Paul says that "our conversation is in heaven; from whence also we look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ: who shall change our vile [mortal] body, that it may be fashioned like unto His glorious body" (Phil. 3:20-21).

Colossians says that "when Christ, who is our life, shall appear, then shall ye also appear with him in glory" (Col. 3:4).

First Thessalonians tells us "the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the

voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise" (I Thess. 4:16).

Second Thessalonians gives us the picture of "the Lord Jesus... revealed from heaven with his mighty angels, in flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God... when he shall come to be glorified in his saints, and to be admired in all them that believe" (II Thess. 1:7-10).

First Timothy gives us a command to keep "without spot, unrebukeable, until the appearing of our Lord Jesus Christ." By doing this we may lay up "in store for [ourselves] a good foundation against the time to come, that [we] may lay hold on eternal life" (I Tim. 6:14, 19).

In **Second Timothy** we read about the crown of life which is laid up in store for all those who "love his appearing" (II Tim. 4:7-8).

In the Epistle to **Titus**, Paul tells of the grace of God by which "we are disciplined to renounce godless ways and worldly desires, and to live a life of temperance, honesty, and godliness in the present age, looking forward to the happy fulfillment of our hope when the splendour of our great God and Saviour Christ Jesus will appear" (Tit. 2:13-14, NEB).

Hebrews speaks of Christ coming "to them that look for him" the "second time without sin unto salvation" (Heb. 9:28).

James tells his readers to "be patient... unto the coming of the Lord" (Jas. 5:7-8).

In his First Epistle, **Peter** encourages his brethren to endure the fiery trial of their faith that they might "be found unto praise and honour and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ" (I Pet. 1:7). He said also, "When the chief Shepherd shall appear, ye shall receive a crown of glory that fadeth not away" (I Pet. 5:4).

In **Second Peter** we find the warning of scoffers who shall come in the last days, saying, "Where is the promise of his coming?" Nevertheless, "the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night" (II Pet. 3:3-4, 10).

John gives the great promise to all the faithful: "Now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when he [Christ] shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is. And every man that hath this hope in him purifieth himself, even as he is pure" (I John 3:2-3).

Jude records the words of Enoch of old: "Behold the Lord cometh with ten thousands of his saints" (Jude 14).

The whole book of **Revelation** is given to revealing events which shall accompany the second advent of Christ. Almost its closing words repeat

the promise of Jesus Himself: "Behold, I come quickly; and my reward is with me, to give every man according as his work shall be.... Surely I come quickly" (Rev. 22:12, 20).

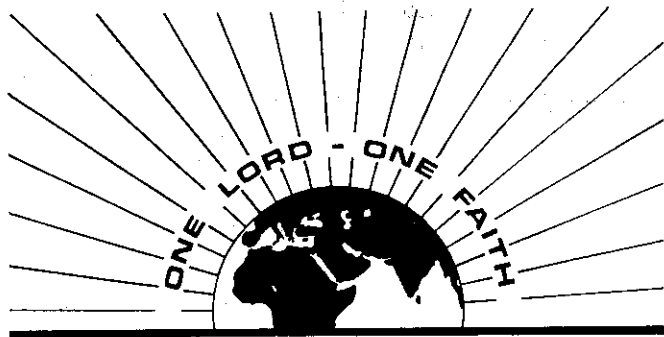
Must we conclude that these promises are past due and out of date? Must we believe that the Early Church was disappointed and that the hope on which they staked their lives is forever unfulfilled? Never! The fact that those early Christians were alive with anticipation shows only their wholehearted commitment to the cause. Paul warned them plainly that "that day shall not come, except there come a falling away first" (II Thess. 2:3). Jesus warned His eager disciples that it would be a "long time" before He would return to reckon with His servants (Matt. 25:19).

Some nineteen hundred years have passed into history since these words were recorded, and the "long time" is nearly over. "Behold he cometh!"—the day draws steadily nearer. Jesus Christ *is* coming again. All history is moving toward that great climactic event when "the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout" (I Thess. 4:16). This present hour may easily be the last in the long day of man's mismanagement. Jesus Christ is coming as earth's Conqueror, Redeemer, and King. We do not know when, but His coming is as certain as tomorrow morning's sunrise. It is as certain as the coming of winter, spring and summer in their appointed season.

Do we believe it? Do we feel the impact of this message from God? Do we sense the urgent responsibility that this promise lays upon us? Then let us stir ourselves with the intensity of those early Christians. Let us believe with every nerve and sinew of our body that Christ *is* coming. Let us "Awake! Arise! Watch! Pray! Seek! Repent! Go! Tell!"—for "the day of the Lord cometh, it is nigh at hand." ●●

REALITIES

*'Tis what we are, not what we seem;
'Tis the work we do, not the dreams we dream;
Not what we have, but what we give;
Not the words we speak, but the life we live;
Not the things we teach, but what we learn;
Not the wrong we do, but the sin we spurn;
Not the valiant deed on the King's highway,
But the gentle deeds from day to day,
The things which help to cheer and bless,
That make the sum of our happiness.*



THE BIBLE, God's Message to Us

Are you one who would like the basic fundamentals of Bible faith, simple and easy to read? Is the whole thought of the living God, the Bible, Christ and salvation new to you? Then read this page. Read it each month. If you speak another language as well as English, translate it so that your friends may read also, and use this page as an introductory unit of study each month. It will help you to a greater understanding of our world, its purpose and its destiny.

THERE are so many different faiths in the world, so many men of so many minds, that the sincere seeker is bewildered and confused. With more than a thousand different faiths each claiming to be "right," how can anyone know what to choose? What is best? What is right?

The choice we make should depend upon our answer to one basic question: What do we expect our religion to do for us? In other words, what are we seeking?

Choosing a religion is something like any other choice in life. When there is choice, there must be sacrifice; for by choosing to have one way of life, we choose *not* to have another. We cannot have everything, only a choice of things. The same is true with religion. Different beliefs offer different goals; different values, different benefits. It is for every man to choose what he believes will most nearly satisfy him.

Ask yourself: Why am I interested in religion? Why am I seeking? What do I expect my religion to do for me? Do I want an easier life? a more carefree life? a more peaceful life? a more satisfying life? a happier life? a more virtuous life?

more social involvement? more fellowship and friends? more opportunity to love and serve?

If these are the extent of your expectations, you should find many religions in this world to satisfy you. Even outside the Christian faith, thousands of people have found peace and satisfaction and the "good life" in the teachings of Buddhism, or Hinduism, or Taoism. Others choose the silent realms of Zen. Still others find happiness and fulfillment in the universal brotherhood ideal of Islam.

Present, human goals are many, if that is what you seek. Many are the religious organizations and sects and church groups who give themselves to the betterment of mankind.

But if you are one who is not content with anything that ends in death; if you are looking for pleasure and happiness beyond the end of mortal life; if you have become convinced that there is something lasting, something eternal available to the sons of men, then you must look further than the reasonings and philosophies of men. For no man of himself has any knowledge of life beyond the perception of his five senses. Man is mortal. Man is corruptible. Man's scope of knowledge is limited. Man's experience is limited. For that which reaches beyond the limits of mortality we must look to One more powerful than ourselves. We must look to God.

But God is in heaven. We are on earth. How can we know anything about what He has to offer us?

Through the ages God has used many different means of communicating with men, and He could use many more if He wished. He could sound His voice like thunder and shake the earth so that all would stop and listen, if He wished. Or He could send personal messengers to tell us directly what He wanted us to know, if He chose to use such a method.

Right now God is using a silent means of communication. Long ago He planned it. He caused a Book to be written, in which He recorded all the information and instruction we would need about Him and His purpose. He preserved that Book, and now it is ours. It is available to men in almost all parts of the world. We call it the Bible.

The Bible is not a book of unfounded feelings and philosophies of men. It is not fantasy or fiction. The Bible is the real record of men and women who actually lived. It tells of events that actually happened. It was written in and about places that actually existed. And it tells of a plan that is slowly and steadily working toward completion.

The Bible is a book of facts.

Why is this so important?

Because if we are staking our life on obtaining a better life, religion for us becomes a matter of life and death—*eternal* life, or *eternal* death. Therefore we must have facts. We must have evidence. We must have certainty.

Now our question is this: How can we be sure that the Bible is a book of facts, that it is not just another book by another group of men? How can we know that its writing was directed by the God of heaven? The Buddhists have their sacred scriptures, and give glowing testimonies of what their religion does for them. The Hindus have their sacred Vedas, the sacred writings of their holy men. And the Moslems have the writings of Mohammed, and so on and on. How can we know that the Bible is not the same as all these other writings, just the words of some more men who had more ideas? How shall we be sure the Bible is the Word of God?

We need evidence, strong supporting evidence. And evidence there is, in abundance.

Now either the Bible is all true, and can be depended on, or it is all false and should be wholly rejected. It is either the Word of God, or it is not; there is no neutral position.

We believe that:

1) The Bible is the only communication of God to men available today.

2) The God of the Bible is the one and only true and living God.

3) The Bible is our only source of knowledge about God and His plan.

What is the evidence?

1) The unity and harmony of the Bible.

The Bible is composed of sixty-six different books, written over a period of 1600 years. The authors of these books were men, human as we are, and they came from all walks of life. Some were kings, some fishermen, some herdsman, statesmen, doctors. These different men wrote in three different languages, and on three continents. Yet they all proclaim *one* message of salvation—how could this be unless all were moved and guided by the same supreme God?

2) The Bible has been preserved.

The Bible has had the fiercest of enemies. It has been burned and its advocates have been persecuted and tortured, to say nothing of the ridicule it has suffered in the hands of intellectuals. Yet it has survived these thousands of years and is available worldwide today in practically every written language on earth.

3) The Bible is verified by fulfilled prophecy.

Within the Bible are hundreds of prophecies which were fulfilled exactly as predicted, and often

hundreds of years later. This feature is unique, not being attempted in the Vedas or the Koran or any other “scriptures” of any other religion. No man has power to foreknow the future. This ability is reserved to God, and the quantity of prophecy in the Bible attests to the fact that it is the written Word of God.

The birth of the Messiah was foretold more than twelve hundred years in advance. Also foretold were His ministry, His betrayal, His death and resurrection. All the forecasts were accurate to their finest detail. There is only one answer. *The Bible is the Word of God.*

4) The Bible is accurate in its teaching.

The Bible supports all true science and its accounts have proven again and again to be historically correct. Archaeology has confirmed and continues to confirm the details of custom, circumstance and setting incorporated in many of the Old Testament accounts. This proves that the Bible is accurate, and that it was written by people who lived at that time.

The accuracy of the Bible is also marvelous when we consider the countless times its messages were copied by ordinary men who could easily have distorted its record. But newly found manuscripts differ hardly at all from those discovered years ago—more evidence that God was at work, preserving His message for men.

5) The Bible writers themselves testify to the God behind them. This feature is unique, for the writers of any other “sacred scriptures” have neither the frequency nor the variety of communications from the God of heaven. And all the words of all its authors combine into one overall teaching and one plan of salvation. This would be impossible, were it the work of ordinary men and uninspired.

The Bible has two main parts, the Old Testament (testament means “covenant”) and the New Testament. Each is God’s covenant or agreement with men, and each proclaims the same God, the same hope, and the same conditions upon which the promises may be obtained—obedience. Much in the New Testament fulfills what is prophecy in the Old. The New Testament writers even quoted from the Old Testament books.

The Bible is divine, for it is the written Word of God. And it is for humankind, for it is written in languages that we can understand. It is God’s own special provision for us, that we may learn the way to eternal salvation. Through the ages since it was completed men have preserved it so that it survives today in almost unbelievable purity.

Indeed, the Bible is the divine Word of God. ●●

Devils that Tempt

(Continued from page 11)

When a devil in the person of a former Herod heard that Jesus was born in Bethlehem, "he was greatly troubled." In fact, he became so enraged when he could not find the Child that he sent "and slew all the male children that were in Bethlehem, and in all the coasts thereof, from two years old and under." Was he not an extremely cruel devil?

What caused him to be so bitter against the Baby Jesus? The conviction was widespread that the Messiah, the heir to the throne of David, was to be born; and Herod, fearing for his own authority, sought to end the life of the youthful heir. But the family escaped; and thirty years later Jesus, having reached the age when He was to begin His great mission, stepped forth from His secluded home in Nazareth to perform mighty signs and wonders.

The tradition of the Messiah who should put down all kings on earth and exalt Himself as universal ruler was spreading at this period, and at the time of His temptation the fame of Jesus as the claimant to the Messiahship was also beginning to be known. Another Herod was in power now, but do you not suppose that he was aware of the events of thirty years previous and wished to make terms with this rapidly rising star in Judea? The devil, or tempter in this case, was most certainly Herod or someone of authority acting as his representative.

Have we any substantial evidence for this position? Let us examine each aspect of the incident.

Jesus' enemy or tempter did not understand that the prophecies concerning the Messiah who was to put down all kings of earth and be exalted as universal Ruler were not to be fulfilled until Christ's second coming; therefore, he endeavored to induce Jesus to do him homage.

The first temptation is concerning Jesus' ability to make bread of stones. It was the temptation of material success. There was no need for Jesus to go hungry, now or ever. He had a good trade, was a good organizer. He could build a prosperous business and acquire comfort and wealth. But should He do it?

Here was the temptation.

The second offer of this devil or tempter was concerning authority. Every aspiring young man craves authority, and Jesus was no exception. "Then the devil taketh him up into the holy city, and setteth him on a pinnacle of the temple" (Matt. 4:5). We may wonder how he could take

Jesus to the pinnacle of the temple, for it would require more than human power to transport a man through the air to the top of a tall steeple. But the answer is simple: The pinnacle of the temple, as we are informed by Josephus, was an elevated court or promenade, which overlooked the valley of Jehoshaphat.

The enemy also took Jesus up on a high mountain. The fact of ascending to a high elevation shows that the field of vision was in proportion to the altitude. The tract of country seen would have been Judea, and the offer of power would relate to that country.

Why do we believe that this tempter was a Roman prince or agent of Herod, someone with authority? He had power to allot the provinces of the Roman Empire. "All these things will I give thee, if thou wilt fall down and worship me" (Matt. 4:9), he could say. Furthermore, this devil or enemy tempting Jesus was one who could walk and talk and be visible to the eye. He was a real being, as real as are the devils of today—men and women in every avenue of life who try to lead others in the ways of sin to destruction.

We should observe that the devil, as well as the temptation, was real. The offer of a high position in this world would be a temptation to almost any man, and Jesus was "in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin" (Heb. 4:15). To Jesus, with His superior abilities, the offer of power was a temptation, but He did not yield. In each instance He had the ready answer: "It is written."

What Devil Contended with Michael?

According to the record of Jude (verse 9), a certain devil caused a serious contention with Michael the archangel in the days of Moses. Who was this devil?

We cannot believe the inspired Word pictures any altercation between a literal devil and an angel over the physical body of Moses at the time he died on lonely Mt. Nebo, for he was buried by the angels, no man knowing the place of his burial to this day. How dare we put an interpretation upon this occurrence and say that a corporate devil or Satan contended with an archangel over his body at the time of his burial?

In view of plain Bible teaching regarding devils, what could be the meaning of Jude 9? Why should we suppose that the contention was over the physical body of Moses at the time of his pre-arranged demise on Mt. Nebo? There is not a single suggestion of such an experience in the short account in Deuteronomy 34.

A more realistic approach to the meaning of

Jude 9, and one which does not conflict with the general teaching of the Bible, would be on this wise: Moses, as the archangel, "contended," that is, "argued" or "debated" (these last two terms are used in the newer versions) with the devil Pharaoh, over the freeing of the children of Israel, said to be Moses' body—his group of followers.

Now let us see how this approach fits into the picture. First, what does the name Michael mean? The name means "one like God." Can we ascertain that Moses was in God's place or like Him when the children of Israel were saved from the thrall-
dom of Egypt? Yes, we can: "And the Lord said unto Moses, See I have made thee a god to Pharaoh: and Aaron thy brother shall be thy prophet. Thou shalt speak all that I command thee: and Aaron thy brother shall speak unto Pharaoh, that he send the children of Israel out of this land" (Ex. 7:1). We learn from this testimony that Moses was made a god to Pharaoh, or was to act in a place of authority. Again in Ex. 4:16, the Lord, speaking of Aaron, says to Moses: "And he shall be thy spokesman unto the people: and he shall be to thee instead of a mouth, and thou shalt be to him instead of God." Moses was acting in God's place; he was the god, or Michael, or chief one, to Pharaoh.

Now having shown who was the Michael, who was the adversary or devil? Certainly the great adversary to Moses in this transaction was Pharaoh. The entire contention was caused by this strong opposer to God. Moses' constant cry to Pharaoh was: "Thus saith the Lord, Let my people go, that they may serve me." Michael, or Moses, the one acting in God's place, went to Pharaoh to demand that he let the people go; clearly Pharaoh was the "devil" in the case.

Who was the body of Moses over whom he, or Michael (one in God's place) and Pharaoh, the great adversary, contended? It was the children of Israel. The troops under a military commander are commonly termed his body. Furthermore, in Biblical phraseology the church is called Christ's body (I Cor. 12:27; Eph. 1:23); on the same principle, Israel would have been Moses' body. ●●

Do not dodge crisis. It is a normal part of real life. In different zones the dawn arrives in different ways. With us the morning comes gradually, slowly passes from dark through twilight into sunshine, but in the tropics morning is precipitate—

... the dawn comes up like thunder.

O Eternal Father, bring the morning up like that in our lives here!

February, 1975

**Kathy
Kandor's
Korner**

Tame the Tantrums

WHEN Jane stopped by this morning, she had just come from Irene Dunn's.

"Really, Kathy," she chuckled, "it was just too amusing! Jim nearly died laughing at Irene's little girl."

"Whatever did that tot do that was so amusing?" I queried.

"Why, she threatened to kick Jim *upside down* if he didn't stop teasing her. And you know how *big* Jim is and how *tiny* Lois is. I never saw a tot with so much spunk!"

I just couldn't see anything to be amused about. To me this was serious, very serious. A tiny tot with so violent a temper—how could anyone encourage the child by being amused at the misconduct?

I was pained. My own teen years rose up before me, the suffering, humiliation, grief and remorse I had experienced because of my own temper allowed to go unrestrained in childhood.

I made no reply to Jane; she must have felt it. But I think it my moral duty to convey to her some of my thoughts.

Sauciness and tantrums in a youngster should never, never, never be considered "cute." "Coming events," it is said, "cast their shadows before." And temper uncorrected in a youngster is an unvarying indication of what lies ahead of him—trouble, *trouble*, TROUBLE!

If only my own antics had been taken care of on the spot—the tempestuous outbursts that amused my aunts and uncles and grandparents and parents—I might have avoided the pain and frustration that nearly wrecked me in my high school years. My periodic flares of anger left me just about friendless at times. My poor bewildered mother just gave up—weary, she told me, of battling my stubborn will. Of course I took every advantage

to have my way, which only made me more miserable.

Well, thanks to God's Word and the help of some real Christian friends, I've been able to improve. But I have decided to spare my children the misery I experienced. I actually got down on my knees and asked the Lord for strength to teach my children right at the start. I recall being at Karen's (Karen is my twin sister) when Martin (her four-year-old live-wire) tore around the house in command of everybody. Karen and Dick just sighed and looked at each other. So did my husband and I—but with a determination to do better than *that*.

When Brenda, scarcely six months old, let out her first angry howl that nearly raised the roof, I decided *that* was the time to do something about it.

Brenda soon got the message. She could not let her emotions get violent without making those she loved unhappy, and a tantrum never procured anything but punishment. When I told her to do something or not to do it, she knew I meant what I said. I tried above all things to be consistent, never punishing her one time for certain misbehavior and letting her get by with the same at another time.

Our children are happy, in contrast to my own miserable childhood.

God knows best, and His advice is: "He that spareth his rod hateth his son: but he that loveth him chasteneth him early."

I was stung by Ecclesiastes 7:9, "Anger resteth in the bosom of fools." I was actually making fools of my children if I allowed anger to rule them!

Our first duty as parents is to bring our children up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord. Are we not failing them miserably when we allow them to have their own way, instead of correcting them in kindness?

Too soon they must leave the influence of home and enter a godless world. Are we preparing them to stand for the right at all times? Have we taught

them that "He who rules his temper is greater than he who takes a city?"

How are we succeeding, you and I?

Yours trying,

Kathy

Beyond the Expressible

(Continued from page 7)

apathy and tranquility that is never disturbed by anything. We need to be overwhelmed when we realize we are dealing with the Infinite. We need to be put to silence in the presence of the Divine. We need to be confounded by the magnitude of what He offers us.

When we become glib in prayer, we are talking only to ourselves. When we read His Word and feel no personal gripping power in our hearts; when we study the lives and achievements of His saints and prophets and sense no personal acquaintance with God or His family, we should beware; for whether we know it or not, our direction is surely down.

Real spiritual progress can be made only by those who know the "Ohs" and "Ahs" that come by projecting one's thoughts into the sublime and fitting one's life for eternity. Such hearts are knit together to the divine, and the association is indescribable. The prospect before them—even life forevermore!—is confounding. And this is as it should be, for God does not want men and women who are cold and detached and disinterested. He has told us great things, and He wants us to respond. He wants His truth, His law, His promises to touch and move our hearts. For He must have, above all else, that perfect and complete obedience which comes only from the depths of the dedicated heart. ●●

Give me this day, O God,

The energy I need to face my work;

The diligence I need to do it well;

The self-discipline which will make me work just as hard when there is none to see, none to praise, and none to blame—but Thee;

The self-respect which will not stoop to produce anything less than my best;

The courtesy and the consideration which will make me easy to live with and work with.

Take from me all envy of anyone else, all resentment and all bitterness.

Help me to work to be at peace with myself, with my fellowmen, and with Thee.

I pray for Thy soon-coming Kingdom. Amen.



No Easy Way

A specific incident in Christ's life is very much overlooked by today's "redemptive churches."

The question was put to Jesus, "Master, what good must I do to gain eternal life?" The answer was astoundingly simple: "If you wish to enter into life, keep the commandments." Yes, keep the commandments. If there were anything more, it would have been said.

Today, mankind is far advanced in his technology. He has invented ways to make work easier. He has invented ways to make life safer. But there is no invention he can think of which will make the narrow path any easier. Any improvisations which do this fall short of their intended goal. Jesus said, "My yoke is light." And it is, in comparison to the reward.

It is useful to be reminded of things in their proper perspective lest we put too much emphasis on the wrong things.

Looking Inward

It is always good to take a long look at self. We should do it more often to keep ourselves in line, for if other people can see faults in us, surely God can. I am sure that if we really tried we could be much better; we allow things to enter our heads and our lives which just should not be there; we have no excuse at all, for we have God's Word, we have His help, and we have the best example in Christ that anyone could have, besides all the other examples in God's Word and all the warnings it contains. We could if we tried harder lift ourselves even higher from the world and all its joys, filth and pleasure.

May all we come in contact with be able to see that we are the Lord's.

Nottinghamshire, England

H. L.

Move—in the Right Direction

We live in an age of go, run, move, act. It would be so much better and easier if we would go, run, move and act in the right direction and towards the right goal. It seems most of us are always ready to be on the run for things that do not amount to much or that do not benefit us spiritually.

It is much harder to wait than to move. Waiting requires a great deal of patience, and we must let patience have her perfect work. Waiting also requires watching, as Jesus told us (Mark 13:35-37).

While we are waiting and watching, we must purify ourselves from every evil. This will take all the time that is allotted us. So let us go, run, move and act in the right direction.

Union Lake, Michigan

E. H.

Everyday Christians

We need a religion that will make Christians out of us daily, not once a week. And in order to do this, we must take in spiritual food from the Scriptures every day, to keep our minds on good things. I have lots of work to do on self; I need every day.

LaGrande, Oregon

Mrs. P.

Changing?

I know that my studying helps me think and check myself each day. I also know I must do some changing of myself. As I stop watching TV, it is less and less interesting and reading worthwhile literature can become a habit, too.

Thank you for all the spiritual help.

Williamsville, New York

Mrs. J. K.

HAVE YOU READ?--

**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?
HELL AND THE DEVIL
TRINITY OR UNITY?
THE HOLY SPIRIT
THE ATONEMENT
THE SABBATH**

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QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

"As I understand it, Jesus told us to 'count the cost,' meaning that we should learn what God offers us and what it will cost us in terms of personal sacrifice before we make a decision for or against Him.

"But it seems to me that we can never learn all that is required and be able really to 'count the cost' until we have given ourselves completely. Am I right?"

You are correct in saying that Jesus taught we should "learn what He offers and what it will cost us in terms of personal sacrifice before we make a decision for or against Him." As Jesus said, this is only good business policy. "For which of you, intending to build a tower, sitteth not down first, and counteth the cost, whether he have sufficient to finish it? Lest haply, after he hath laid the foundation, and is not able to finish it, all that behold it begin to mock him, saying, This man began to build, and was not able to finish" (Luke 14:28-29).

Jesus' words are a sharp warning against impulsive decision. One might read the words of Jesus, for example, the beatitudes, and ask himself, "Can I live by all these? They are a high tower." Or he might read of Paul's all-out dedication and ask himself, "Am I willing to make such a sacrifice? How much does the prize of life eternal mean to me? What is it worth?" This is counting the cost.

Weighing the value of the sacrifice against the value of what is to be gained is essential. Yet you are also correct in observing that one cannot fully realize the value of what he has until he has surrendered it. The same principle might be applied to any aspect of life, for in a certain sense we do not fully understand anything we have not experienced, though we can learn from the experiences of others.

In our Christian life, we are "ever learning." And this is right and normal. Paul prayed that his brethren "might be filled with the knowledge of his [God's] will in all wisdom and spiritual understanding," expressing at the same time his desire that they "walk worthy of the Lord unto all pleasing, being fruitful in every good work, and increasing in the knowledge of God" (Col. 1:9-10). Though they were committed brethren, they were still to keep "increasing in the knowledge of God."

The apostle Peter listed knowledge as one of the primary virtues to be continually added to the developing Christian character (II Pet. 1:5-7). We

must keep growing in knowledge and understanding of God, His plan, His will, and also in knowledge of ourselves.

The real value of counting the cost lies in an initial persuasion that the reward God offers is so great as to be worth *any* price and any cost in self-sacrifice, and the determination that whatever the Lord may ask us to surrender we *will* surrender, in full faith that God will recompense abundantly. This is the attitude with which the life-seeker must commence and continue, if he would make his life-quest a success. ••

Meditations On the Word

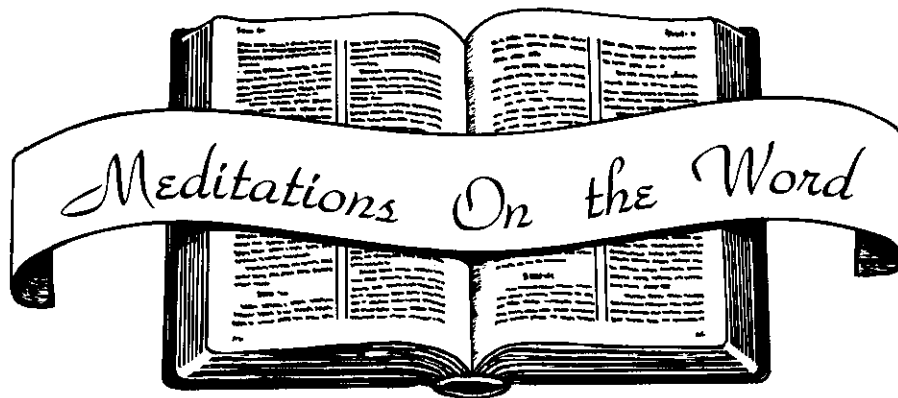
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upon the hearth of our soul. The course of revenge and retaliation is a rough one, the first to suffer being ourselves. The injury done by another that we allow to make us ill, will not be made well by revenge, no matter how seemingly sweet. The Bible gives the best method of getting even with our adversary: it is *forgive and forget*, "heap coals of fire on his head."

A mind receptive to faith and hope, ready to forgive and forget, eager to think well of others and wish them well, is the poised and happy soul that Paul was speaking about in I Corinthians 13:4-7. "Charity suffereth long, and is kind; charity envieth not; charity vaunteth not itself, is not puffed up, doth not behave itself unseemly, seeketh not her own, is not easily provoked, thinketh no evil; rejoiceth not in iniquity, but rejoiceth in the truth; beareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things."

In an old English paper once appeared a prayer that runs thus: "O God, pour out upon our enemies with bountiful hands whatever Thou knowest may do them good, and chiefly a sound mind and uncorrupted mind, through which they may know Thee and seek Thee with their whole heart and love us. Let not their first hating of us turn to their harm, neither in anywise let us hurt them, seeing that we cannot do them good for want of ability. Lord, we desire their amendment, not their chastisement. Separate them not from us by punishing them, but join and knit them to us by Thy favorable dealing with them."

More excellent than the scent of sandal and rosebay, of lily, orange, or jasmine is the lovely, lingering, yet invigorating and commanding fragrance of forgiveness. ••



"Grudge not one against another, brethren, lest ye be condemned: behold, the judge standeth before the door"

(James 5:9)

WE somehow get the idea that folks do not like us or are thinking ill of us, and what is our reaction? We are virtually unnerved in their presence, and everything we do or say seemingly increases this feeling of disapproval and the tensions which follow. Thoughts have the power to bless or to burn. They have more power than any other energy known to man, including atomic energy, for not even that great power can separate us from our grudges; but happy, disciplined thoughts can.

Have we ever stopped to consider how often our dislike of another person or our grudges are based on the fact that we do not know that person? We may have heard the old proverb, "To know all is to forgive all." Although this is not always the case, yet in the majority of instances to know your antagonist's trials, heartaches, ambitions and temptations would greatly help. Such ignorance is the root of many grudges and cruel injustices which are practiced by us and on us. If we brought even a fraction of the energy to bear in an effort to remove the grudge that we do to keep it thriving, we would have few, if any, grievances left.

The teacher of kindergarten pupils is told that her first task is to study the child, get his viewpoint and background. No matter what our age, we never cease to be children in this sense that we want to be understood, appreciated, and our particular or even peculiar viewpoint considered, even if not agreed with. Every normal person wants love, fears rejection, craves understanding, experiences anxiety and longs to fill a worthy role in the world of action. When we strive to understand others we are also helping ourselves. The days of our mortal life "are few," as the patient Job observed, and "full of trouble," too few in fact to be wasted on endless quarrels and strife. The

sour grapes of selfishness, suspicion, hate, bitterness and grudges supply no nourishment to the spirit; instead they set the teeth of our soul on edge and add further to our discomfort.

When one is sick at heart or mind, one is sicker than from any physical disease. When he is well there, the sense of well-being exceeds anything physical health can give. The cases of soul-sickness have been set by physicians as between sixty and ninety per cent of all known maladies; at least half and even as high as nine out of ten people are suffering from psychosomatic ailments. This clearly shows the need to guard the trend of our thoughts and gateway of our emotions even more carefully than we watch our literal diet.

When we abandon ourselves to hatred and prejudices, or indulge in envious or bitter thoughts, harbor resentments and nurse grudges, we are doing ourselves much physical harm, to say nothing of our spiritual health. Take, for example, our grudge: this is the point where strife and feuds arise, and all friendships start to come apart. It is where we feel a sense of grievance against another. This emotion is a mixture of anger, resentment and frustration, and when we take these on as traveling companions on life's journey we are taking on something that we cannot carry without injury to our spiritual and physical health. A grudge held in the mind over a long period of time is likely, and has been known to produce as serious physical effects as the staphylococci virus—even to the point of being fatal.

The fact that we have a deep grudge against someone does not always do any particular harm to the victim of our spite, for he or she may not even be aware of the fire of resentment that burns

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My Prayer

*I want a principle within
Of jealous, godly fear,
A sensibility of sin,
A pain to feel it near.
Help me the first approach to feel
Of pride or wrong desire,
To catch the wandering of my will
And quench the kindling fire.*

*Almighty God of truth and love,
To me Thy power impart;
I want to sense the smallest sin
And hardness in my heart;
I come to Thee, Thou Living One,
For help to be made whole;
Oh, may the least omission pain
My reawakened soul!*

--Sel. and alt.