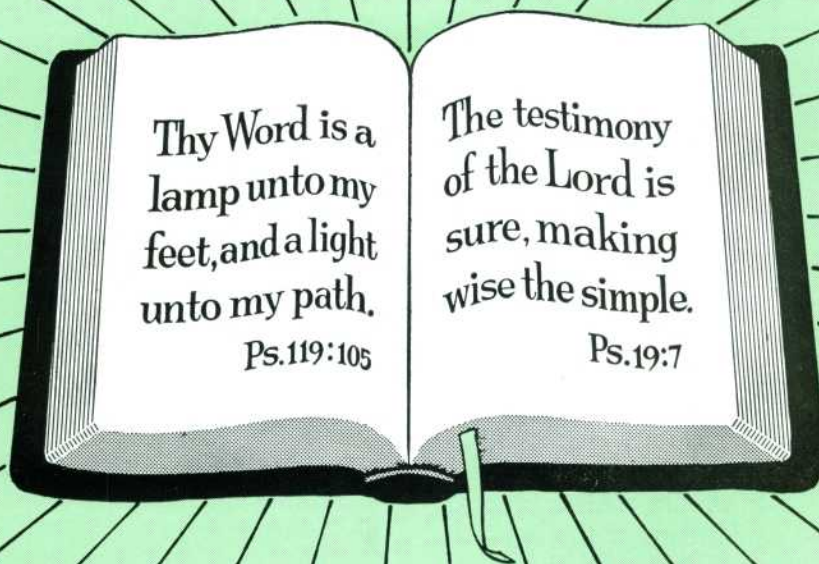


Megiddo Message

DEVOTED TO THE CAUSE OF CHRIST



Discipline Yourself . . . for Godliness

Should One Christian Tell Another What To Do?

Glorying in the Cross

Beyond Death-?

A Time to Rejoice?

HAS joy any place in our modern world? What is your attitude toward joy? If you were to list the words that describe the way you feel about life, would you include "joyful"? How far down on the list would that term be?

Some people today feel it is foolish to have joy in the midst of a world that is seemingly doomed and perishing, when morality is a thing of the past and corruption is ruining so much of business and politics. Some feel it is even a sin to be joyful in a world where so many must suffer the afflictions of war, poverty and oppression.

Yet one of the commonest words in the New Testament is joy, rejoice, be joyful. It appears about 150 times. The sheer weight of repetition testifies that the early Church felt joy a significant aspect of genuine faith in God.

Read again those matchless documents by the Biblical historian, the books of Luke and the Acts of the Apostles, and you will catch the breathless and joyous happiness of those devoted souls. Theirs was not the quiet, sad apathy of the Stoic, or the endless pleasure-pursuing of the Epicurean, or the separated contemplation of the mystic and the ascetic. Theirs was an uncontainable overflowing of authentic aliveness which the world could neither produce nor destroy. Paul put it this way: "We have sorrow, yet our joy is inextinguishable." And he commanded his brethren to follow his example: "Always rejoice," he said. "I repeat, always rejoice."

If joy seems too light and carefree an attitude for the serious Christian, perhaps we are misunderstanding the term. Christian joy is not a state of excitement; it is not the result of sense stimulation; it is not a light feeling of satisfaction that comes from desire gratified. Neither is it the product of riding high in the shiny carriage of public acclaim.

The early Church was neither rich nor popular. Its members were a poor and often despised minority. Yet they had a joy unknown in the world of their time. Jesus had joy to impart to His disciples even on the night He was betrayed. "These things have I spoken unto you, that my joy might remain in you, and that your joy might be full" (John 15:11).

Life is made up of experiences, some bitter, some sweet. But the serious Christian can respond to each with an inner joy in the knowledge that all things are working together for good. A strong, abiding faith in God is the real source of joy.

Jesus' joy came from His boundless faith in His heavenly Father. He thought of God as a divine Parent who works all things for the benefit of His children, who disciplines those He loves and watches over them with never-failing kindness.

Jesus' joy came also from His faith in the future. The trials of the present need not weigh any man down, they are so temporary. The indescribable joy of victorious achievement and eternal reward will far surpass the moment of pain.

Jesus saw life as inescapably demanding. Everything has a price, He said. You must pay for what you get. The question is, What do you want? It is like a man finding a treasure in a field. "In his joy he goes and sells all that he has and buys that field." Sacrifice? Yes, it cost him all that he had. But it was worth the price. Over and above the sacrifice was genuine joy.

We need more of this joy today, a Christian spirit of supreme confidence in God that can always see the present as worth a moment and the future as eternity. Only then will the children of the Millennium be able to look back and say of the Christians of this sin-filled age, "They had their troubles; but their joy was inextinguishable!"●●

A religious magazine, devoted to the cause of Christ and published for the dissemination of Bible truth alone.

OFFICIAL ORGAN OF
THE MEGIDDO MISSION CHURCH
L. T. NICHOLS, *Founder*
KENNETH E. FLOWERDAY, *Editor*

The MEGIDDO MESSAGE will

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

Published monthly by the
MEGIDDO MISSION CHURCH
481 Thurston Road
Rochester, N. Y. 14619

● SUBSCRIPTION RATES: One year, \$2.00; six months, \$1.00. Make checks or money orders for all literature payable to the Megiddo Mission Church. Please notify promptly of any change of address. Foreign subscribers, please make all payments by international money orders, available at most banks and post offices.

Second Class Postage paid at Rochester, New York.

Megiddo Means

"a place of troops"

—Gesenius' Hebrew Lexicon

"a place of God"

—Young's Analytical Concordance

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

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

Megiddo Message

February, 1976

Vol. 63, No. 2

EDITORIAL

2 A Time to Rejoice?

Is it right or possible to rejoice *in spite of*? The early Christians did!

ARTICLES

4 "Discipline Yourself . . . for Godliness"

It takes time, practice, patience and effort. But it *pays*!

5 We Pray

A prayer by our pastor, K. E. Flowerday

9 A Living Barrier

A story from Australia

10 Should One Christian Tell Another What To Do?

It may be hard, but it is something every Christian must learn.

17 Glorifying in the Cross

by Percy J. Thatcher

Bearing the cross is one thing; glorying in it is another.

REGULAR FEATURES

9 Fruitful Fragments

12 Kathy Kandor's Korner : UN-Covering Up

Tell it like it is—God can see through the best covering.

13 Understanding the Bible : The Mosaic Law

A study of the law and its meaning for us today.

20 From Parent to Parent : Improve that Mood!

What is the mood of *your* home?

20 I'm Thinking

Bible questions for the young—and old.

21 One Lord, One Faith : Beyond Death—?

What is immortality? What will it mean to us?

26 Meditations on the Word : Faith That Has Power

On Matthew 17:20. Learn how real Bible faith *can* move mountains.

27 Our Readers Write

28 Cover Feature

A prayer for *Cleansing*.

"Discipline Yourself... for Godliness"

A SPROUTED acorn is not an oak.
A rough piece of ore from the earth is not a watch spring.

A newborn infant is not an engineer.

Nature offers few products in their finished form. Between the raw material and the perfect product is a period of growth, development, training, discipline.

The same is true of God's products. God never has, and does not even in our modern world, find the men and women He needs all ready-made. Christians are not born. They must be developed, fashioned, trained in the school of discipline. There is no other way.

Did you ever decide that you wanted to be done with everything that is wrong and evil? Did you ever strike out wholeheartedly for the heights of godliness? Did you ever sincerely decide that you wanted to do right, and nothing but right—and did you fail?

There are many reasons for such failure. The first reason is that we today are geared for everything quick and easy. This is the day for *instant* products. We have instant potatoes, instant puddings, instant houses shipped on trucks, instant everything. And we want instant godliness as well. We want somebody to give us three easy steps, and we'll take them all next Friday and be godly.

But the trouble is: Godliness does not come that way.

Paul wrote to Timothy exactly how godliness *does* come. He said with all his fatherly directness, "Timothy, you must discipline yourself for the purpose of godliness" (I Tim. 4:7, NASB). The secret of godliness is discipline.

* For major portions of this article we are indebted to Jay E. Adams for his booklet entitled "Godliness Through Discipline," published by Presbyterian and Reformed Publishing Co. Copyright 1972.

Discipline—the word sounds harsh and intolerant in our soft, easy-going age, rather old-fashioned and out of style. The word discipline has all but disappeared from our minds, our mouths, our pulpits, our culture. We hardly know what it means. Yet discipline, everyday practical down-to-earth discipline, is the way to godliness. You must learn to discipline yourself for the purpose of godliness.

The first thing to note here is that there is no option in the matter. Paul does not suggest that Timothy should be godly. That knowledge is fundamental. God intends that all His children be godly. And Paul's words are a divine command by which God tells us *how* we can become godly—by disciplining ourselves for that purpose. In other places God has commanded the same. He says, for example, "Be ye holy, for I am holy," and "Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect" (I Pet. 1:15; Matt. 5:48). Perfect godliness is the goal, for "godliness is profitable for all things, since it holds promise for the present life and also for the life to come" (I Tim. 4:8, NASB). And toward this godliness every believer must discipline himself every day. This means becoming more like God every day.

The godly man leads a life that reflects God. He seeks to please God by being, thinking, doing, saying and feeling in the ways God wants us to.

Now notice that God says we are to discipline ourselves "for the purpose of [literally, *toward*] godliness." The original meaning is "to be oriented toward godliness." This means that our whole life ought to be disciplined (i. e., structured, set up, organized, and running day by day) toward the goal of godliness. Everything that happens and everything that we do contributes something toward reaching that goal. Not only on Sunday but Monday through Saturday we must move toward the goal, one step, or two steps or ten steps up the road.

When we get our life oriented toward godliness, we will constantly keep the goal in our mind.

MEGIDDO MESSAGE

Whether at work, at home, or in school, we will think, "I am to reflect God in this project." Isn't that what we want? Isn't that the way to godliness? There are times, of course, when we get discouraged and tired; but through it all we must never lose sight of the goal. The well of God's promises within us must never run dry. We must keep ourselves reminded of the great future God has planned and keep telling ourselves, "I want *that*." Then the hard road to godliness will become easier.

Paul wrote to the Corinthian brethren, "If any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new" (II Cor. 5:17). But here again is a *non*-instant process. When we set ourselves in the way of God and His holiness, our lives receive new direction and new purpose. There is a new focus on all of life. But that does not automatically make us one hundred percent new. Our old ways of living, what Paul calls our "old man," are still very much alive. We must learn to discipline ourselves in godliness before "all things" actually "become new." There is no other way.

Discipline—How?

How do we go about to discipline ourselves toward godliness?

We Pray

Almighty Creator of heaven and earth, O Thou great and wondrous Being, help us to realize more each day our dependence upon Thee, our indebtedness to Thee. We are Thy suppliant children, who subsist under the cover of Thy patience. We praise Thee for all of Thy extraordinary mercies; they are new every morning. Great is Thy faithfulness.

Help us to make an application of the words we read in Thy blessed Book to our everyday living, that we may be impelled to sacrifice to Thee a broken and contrite heart, that we may be impelled to turn from every evil way. Alert us that sin is the transgression of Thy law, and if persisted in will most certainly end in destruction.

Strengthen us so we will obey from the heart that form of doctrine delivered to the saints, so we can gain life immortal—a boon worth being all enthused about gaining. Help us to realize how short and fleeting and vain are life's hopes. Grant us the wisdom to set our affection on that which will never pass away, that which will not end in the

The first step is to realize that it is a process involving time and patience and work. Godliness cannot be whipped up like instant pudding. Godliness does not come that way. Discipline means work; it means sustained daily effort. The word Paul used is the one from which the English words "gymnastics" and "gymnasium" have been derived. It is a term clearly related to athletics. An athlete becomes an expert only by years of hard practice. There are no instant athletes. Can we think for a moment that the world's greatest baseball player simply appeared in the stadium one afternoon and decided that he would play ball? No, he spent countless hours practicing. It took years of regular practice to achieve his skill.

No weight lifter, for example, says, "Here is a heavy weight. I have never lifted any weights before, but that looks like the largest one. I'll try it." Such a man would be likely to break his back. It just isn't possible to succeed that way. He must start out with a small weight the first week, then gradually over months and years add heavier and heavier ones. He must work up gradually to the heaviest.

Nor does the weight lifter decide, "This week I'll lift weights for five hours on Friday and then I'll forget about it for the next six weeks." Athletes must train by regular, daily practice. They

oblivion of the tomb. Help us to have a conscience educated by divine law, that we may enjoy happiness in the end.

Help us more and more to have our senses exercised to discern between good and evil; and love the good for what it will bring us both now and in the world to come. Help us to lay hold of Thy great and precious promises, and may our overpowering desire to obtain them impel us to willingly accept of Thy discipline now, aware that Thou disciplinest the man whom Thou dost love, and that correction is an assurance of Thy interest in us and of Thy love for us, for our eternal good.

In these decadent days when the best standards man has been able to design are collapsing in failure, grant that we may look up, that we may look ahead with confident expectation, that we may prepare to have part in the better arrangement that will come with the apocalypse of Thy dear Son from heaven. Grant us the insight to know that the disheartening things of the present are merely the darkness before the dawn, and are hastening the arrival of Thy glorious, eternal Day.

In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.

must work steadily, day after day, until what they are doing becomes "natural," second nature to them.

That is what an athlete does. And Paul says that is exactly what is involved in Christian discipline. It must be a continued daily effort.

Practically speaking, what does this involve?

A Cross To Take

In Luke 9:23, Jesus commanded His disciples: "If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow me." "Take up your cross daily," denying yourself. He does not mean to deny yourself *something*. There is no idea of doing penance in this. It is not the ascetic's idea of subjecting oneself to physical misery and going without the elements that make life livable. Rather, Jesus insisted that Christians must deny *the self* within them. By the self, He meant the old desires, the old ways, the old practices, the old habit patterns that belong to this present world. These had become so much a part of day-to-day practice that they had become second nature. The old life had been disciplined toward *ungodliness*. To achieve godliness the believer must daily deny, or literally say "No," to the self.

Daily denial of the self indicates the presence of a day-to-day battle inside the Christian. He must "take up the cross" as an instrument of death upon which to crucify the self every day. Taking up the cross does not mean carrying some heavy burden. It does not even mean enduring one long and severe trial. Taking up the cross means going to the place of death. It means putting to death the old life patterns of the old man.

But that is not enough either. When God says "put off" He also says "put on." There is a positive side, as well as a negative. On the positive side, each day we take up the cross and deny the self, we must "follow" Christ, do as He did, live as He lived. That is what it means to discipline oneself for godliness. It means to continue to say "no" to self and to say "yes" to Christ every day until one by one each of the old habits and ways are replaced with new ones. It means that by daily endeavor to follow God's Son we find at length that to do so is more "natural" than not to do so. That is what discipline toward godliness is all about. It is to become more and more "naturally" like God.

The Power of Habit

When a Christian daily orients his life toward godliness through discipline, something happens. God has given man a marvelous capacity that we call habit. Whenever we do something long enough

it becomes a part of us. For example, how do you go about putting a fork-full of food into your mouth? You cannot "see" where you are putting it. But through practice you have learned to coordinate your muscles until you no longer give it any thought. Or again, how do you clean your teeth, or button your shirt? These small daily actions you have practiced so long that they are habits; you no longer have to give them conscious thought.

This is what the writer of Hebrews tells us we should do in matters of Christian discipline. He is upbraiding the Hebrew Christians because, though they had received so much teaching of God's Word, they had not been using it to spiritual profit. Consequently, when they ought to have been teachers, they still needed to be taught. He says, "For though by this time you ought to be teachers, you have need again for some one to teach you the elementary principles of the oracles of God, and you have come to need milk and not solid food. For everyone who partakes only of milk is not accustomed to the word of righteousness, for he is a babe. But solid food [meat and potatoes] is for the mature who because of practice [daily self-discipline] have their senses trained to discern good and evil" (Heb. 5:12-14, NASB). Here it is plainly stated. The practice of godliness leads to the life of godliness. Only the practice of godliness makes godliness natural. Only through practice will the life of obedience become part of us. There is no simple, quick, easy way to instant godliness.

Does such godliness seem impossible? Is it hard to believe that to do right can actually become so natural that it will be our first thought and instinct?

Consider the unconscious habit patterns you have already developed. There is no question that the habit capacity is there. The problem is that we naturally use it for the wrong purposes. The capacity of habit can work both ways, either for us or against us. We cannot avoid habitual living. God gave us the ability to live a life that does not demand conscious thought about every action and response. It is a great blessing. Life would be unbearable any other way. Imagine yourself awaking each morning and figuring out just what muscles you should use to get yourself out of bed, and then just how you should maneuver to take a step and walk, etc., etc. It is a great benefit that we don't have to consciously think about everything we do, or we might not eat breakfast before midnight.

But practice alone is not the answer. Practice can work either as a blessing or a curse, depending upon what we practice. It is what we feed into our lives that matters—like the data fed into a com-

puter. A computer is no better than the data which is put into it. The end product is good or bad according to the raw material provided it. That is just like our habit capability. Peter speaks of those people whose hearts are "trained in greed" (II Pet. 2:14, NASB). "Trained" is the same word Paul used when he spoke of exercise and gymnastics. A heart that has been exercised in greed is one that has faithfully practiced greed so that greediness has become natural. Without consciously thinking about it, such a person "automatically" behaves greedily in various situations where the temptation is present.

Re-Orienting

Since God made us with the marvelous capacity for living by habit, we need to take a long and hard and careful look at our own lives. We must make conscious and careful examination of our unconscious responses. We must become aware of our life patterns and evaluate them by the Word of God. Pattern by pattern we must analyze and determine whether our thought habits, our habits of conduct, our word patterns, the motives that impel us, are developed from practice in doing God's will or whether it is an instinctive, natural human response. There is only one way to become godly, and that is to orient our lives pattern by pattern toward godliness. Old sinful ways must be discovered and replaced by new patterns from God's Word. That is the meaning of disciplined living. Discipline first requires self-examination, then it means crucifixion of the old, and lastly practice in following the new and right way. It is not simple, but it is sure.

Change?

You may ask, Can I change my habits? Can a person who has practiced years in doing the wrong things change and do right? Can I change and start to live a life that really will be godly?

The answer is yes. The longer the evil is practiced, the more firmly established the habit and the more difficult the change. But change is possible, as long as life lasts. God never said that a person who reaches a certain age is from that point forward incapable of changing. Abraham was seventy-five years old before God called him. And what tremendous changes God demanded of him in his old age!

But change requires effort. The Christian life is described as a "walk," not a rest. "This I say then, Walk in the spirit, and ye shall not fulfill the lust of the flesh" (Gal. 5:16). "If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit" (Gal.

5:25). "See then that ye walk circumspectly, . . . redeeming the time" (Eph. 5:15-16). "Walk in wisdom toward them that are without" (Col. 4:5). "As ye have received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk ye in him" (Col. 2:6). "For ye were sometimes darkness, but now are ye light in the Lord: walk as children of light" (Eph. 5:8). As long as we live, we must keep up this walk, keep disciplining ourselves, training ourselves in godliness. Never do we reach the point where we can say, "There is nothing more to learn from God's Word, nothing for me to put into practice tomorrow, no more skills to perfect, no more sin to be dealt with. When Christ said, "Take up your cross daily and follow me," He put an end to all such thinking. He represented the Christian life as a daily struggle to change.

The Bible puts great stress on the effort we must make as Christians toward godliness, and it must not be taken lightly. The Bible is God's Book, written for our learning. God inspired it. God moved its authors to write it that we may read and learn. It is His Book, the sharp tool by which He accomplishes His work. He did not give us the

(Continued on Page 8)

Self-Denial Week

This year the Megiddo Church's annual week of Self-Denial will be observed February 1-7.

During this week we will limit ourselves to three articles of food at each meal. We shall make our selection from simple, plain, 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 first of our need, not of our taste.

Eating to satisfaction of three articles of staple food can scarcely be termed a hardship. Yet it is a restriction and requires a measure of self-discipline—a spiritual exercise which is vital to the life of the God-controlled man. Self-denial is a long established Bible principle, of which the denial of food variety is the very least. Each of us has a will to conquer, a mind that inclines to cherish every wandering thought, a tongue that so easily lets slip the idle word, and hands that can work any deceitful or selfish purpose the mind can devise. These are our real, daily self-denials, and self-denial week should prove a helpful reminder. ●●

"Discipline Yourself . . . for Godliness"

(Continued from page 7)

Book to lay aside and forget. He gave it that we might learn how to become godly. There is no easier path to godliness than the prayerful study and obedient practice of the Word of God.

In II Timothy 3:16, Paul mentions four things that the Scriptures do for the believer. First, they *teach* what God requires. Secondly, the Scriptures *find fault*; that is, they are valuable for convincing a man of the error of his ways and pointing him to the right way. They tell what God calls right and what God calls wrong. Thirdly, the Scriptures are for *correction*, for disproving all false theories and theologies. Lastly, the Scriptures *train* or *discipline* in righteousness. This fourth benefit means a structured training in doing righteousness. It means disciplined living unto godliness.

Obedience or Feeling?

One of the greatest problems in self-discipline is the continual challenge of feeling. We give up, or we do not try, because we do not feel like it. But life is made of many things we don't feel like do-

READ for Your LIFE!

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

GOD'S SPIRITUAL CREATION

THE KINGDOM OF GOD

THE GREAT APOSTASY

AFTER DEATH, WHAT?

HELL AND THE DEVIL

TRINITY OR UNITY?

THE HOLY SPIRIT

THE ATONEMENT

THE SABBATH

COMPLETE SET \$2.00
SINGLE COPIES25

ing. I didn't feel like getting up this morning. But I had to, in spite of how I felt. And after I was up awhile, I was glad I had acted against my feelings. From that first decision on, the day is filled with similar petty decisions which all add up to one fact: whether I live on a basis of obedience to God or surrender to my feelings. Living according to feeling is perhaps the greatest threat to godliness that we face. Godly, obedience-oriented living comes only from Christian discipline.

God gives a command, and He requires obedience. Sin appeals to desire: the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, the pride of life. God calls us to become godly by restraining and disciplining this desire and orienting our lives around obedience.

Discipline Means Liberty

Our whole modern thinking tends in the opposite direction, but discipline is the only way to liberty. It is true in secular fields; it is true in godliness. Suppose I want to learn to play the organ. I decide to forget all discipline and structure. I want to ignore the laws of harmony and scale and pattern. Calling disciplined practice nonsense, I declare, 'I want to play *freely*.' So I sit down at the instrument, turn it on, pull out all sorts of stops, raise my hands and drop them dramatically onto the keys. And noise! Sheer noise! My 'freedom' from discipline yields only ear-shattering shrieks and growls. I find that I cannot make music that way. The same order applies in nearly every area. *First*, discipline; *then* freedom. There is no other way.

Liberty comes through law, not apart from it. When is a railroad train most free? Is it when it goes bouncing across the field off the track? No. It is free only when it is confined to the track. Then it can run smoothly and efficiently. We too need to be on the track. God's track is found in God's Word, and we can't travel far toward His goals without the track.

By far the greatest freedom of disciplined living is future, even "the glorious liberty of the sons of God." Learning to say "no" to ourselves on this level of life will give us the right to say "yes" to greater, heavenly, eternal blessings in the world to come. For the godliness that will result from learning to discipline ourselves has long-range benefits: "godliness is profitable for all things, since it holds promise for the present life and also for the life to come" (I Tim. 4:8).

We want the godliness, and let us yearn for the discipline that brings it—because we want that *life to come!* ●●

MEGIDDO MESSAGE

A Living Barrier

THE Great Barrier Reef, extending over 1260 miles along Australia's eastern coast, is the largest coral reef in the world. Its distance from the coastland varies from thirty miles to about ten miles, and in some places the reef reaches out to sea as much as two hundred miles.

The reef is not one huge formation but innumerable separate reefs of which some 2500 are thought to be identifiable.

Despite the damage often caused by heavy rains, sweeping waters, cyclones and hurricane winds, the Barrier Reef is not destroyed. It is the largest organic structure ever built, a living, self-repairing entity, the creation of millions upon millions of living organisms, both animal and plant. The major builders are the coral animals, known as polyps. Soft and fleshy, and generally about half an inch long, each one forms an external cup-like skeleton of limestone which, in most cases, becomes attached to already existing coral rock. After attachment, most coral polyps and the skeletons they form, divide to create elaborate colonies. These coral colonies grow into an amazing variety of shapes, such as antlers, plates, fans, pencils, etc. They also present a great variety of colors, like a flower garden under the sea—greens or reds, yellows or blues, purples or lilacs, greys or whites, orange or lemon. It is said that nowhere on earth has God painted such dazzling colors as around a coral island.

The coral framework which is constantly growing and changing under water provides shelter for a great variety of marine life—fish, birds, even turtles find shelter and nesting grounds on the reef.

While these corals are a beautiful sight in the waters of the reef, once they are removed from the sea water, the polyps soon die and their brilliant colors fade.

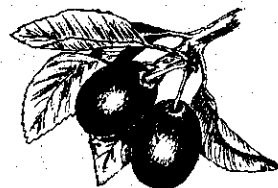
Our spiritual lives may be compared to the tiny coral creatures who are slowly and surely building a habitation of beauty. As they have the vast rock shelf on which to build, so we have the solid rock of God's truth for our foundation. It is our barrier against the seas of adversity and the winds and storms of life, while we are working to build a home of far greater, eternal beauty. This living beauty will, however, be ours only so long as we are covered by the living waters. When we dry, we die.

The tiny polyps of the reef are self-repairing. In fact, in recovering from injuries they branch out into greater expanse of beauty. Just so we must use our buffetings to produce more and more of the everlasting beauties of righteousness.

Like the persistent coral creatures, though, we need to exercise great patience and persistence in our building. It is small, very small. But if we build and keep on building, God will bless our work and we shall someday become a permanent part of His creation. ●●

This article is contributed by two dedicated members and sisters, Alice and Jean Biddle, who live in Queensland, Australia, very near the Reef.

Fruitful Fragments



The Word of God must be the traffic light of our soul—to tell us when to STOP and when to GO.

We should be as sensitive to right as the compass needle is to the pole.

Beware of the cynic's attitude. Cynicism takes the sugar out of life and puts vinegar in its place.

When Christ calls "Follow Me," it is not a call to ease. That means death to self, self-will, self-preference; it means a constant crucifixion of self.

Fame is nothing, publicity is nothing, popularity is nothing. Doing the will of God modestly and faithfully is everything, and the record of it is kept on high.

A Christian is an ordinary man who has committed himself to the school of Christ for the sole purpose of becoming better.

Lord, when we are wrong, make us willing to acknowledge it. And when we are right, restrain us from the desire to prove it.

The altar of sacrifice is the touchstone of character.

The most beautiful thing in the universe is the rightly fashioned moral character of a man of God.

Should One Christian Tell Another What To Do?

THROUGHOUT recorded history there has existed the tendency for one group (usually the stronger or more advantaged) to dictate to another group (the weaker or less advantaged). A large or powerful nation invades a smaller nation and conquers it by its superior military might. The conqueror then imposes its political, economic and even religious philosophy upon the conquered.

Unfortunately this practice has not been confined to secular bodies. During the Apostolic Age, the Jewish nation became very intolerant of the beliefs and practices of others, even including God's own Son, whom they crucified. The great apostle Paul was guilty of persecuting the followers of Christ, until he himself became spectacularly converted (Acts 9).

During the Reformation, the intolerance of both Catholics and Protestants for the views of the other culminated in the most awful persecutions. Remnants of this feeling survive in Ireland today, a continual contradiction of Christian principle. In the early years of our own country, settlers fleeing persecution in Europe imposed similar oppression upon those with differing beliefs in the New World. Escape from the intolerance of others did not make them any *less* intolerant of others.

What has taken place in religious circles recently is what so often happens when one tries to correct an error or injustice; the pendulum swings too far in the opposite direction. Many churches today have fallen victim to permissiveness, easy-going tolerance, an idea that there is no need to condemn anything. Everything is all right as long as we think it is. Conduct is condoned today which in many ages would have received capital punishment. "Value judgments" are taboo. Workmanship can be shoddy and yet acceptable; morals loose; marijuana is legalized; drunkenness is not a crime, only a sickness which should be treated with loving care and sympathy. Adultery, infidelity, wife-swapping, even homosexuality are considered tolerable forms of behavior and self-expression. Men and women

living together without the benefit of a marriage ceremony is increasingly common. Many high schools maintain a nursery so unwed mothers may continue their education. Meanwhile, the television networks feed viewers a steady diet of violence and murder and movies! There is no limit. Sodom and Gomorrah may not have been any worse, but they certainly lacked the technology to broadcast and multiply the evil. According to reports, Dr. Billy Graham made the statement recently that unless a change takes place soon, this nation will not exist by the year 2000.

Should one Christian tell another Christian what to do? Everyone is a free moral agent. Everyone has the right to choose his own destiny. He can obey God's law and live throughout eternity, or he can live according to his own desires and die forever. However, if he has chosen to live the life of a Christian, he becomes a part of the Christian army and is subject to the discipline which that organization imposes. God's law is not a cafeteria where we can pick and choose what we want. God has selected the foods which we must eat. Every command must be kept; to choose is not ours. One Christian, who may be further advanced in the divine life, seeing another in transgressions not only should but has the moral responsibility to tell him what to do.

During the nearly six thousand years God has been working with mankind, He has chosen to work largely through human instrumentality—through prophets, apostles, pastors and teachers. Many times these men of God were bold in their denunciation of the sins of their fellows. This was their duty, but this made them highly unpopular in the eyes of their more lax, freer-thinking contemporaries. Nevertheless, they continued to speak God's Word, whether the people liked it or not. There was always a minority who listened. The majority closed their ears to the warning and even violently rebelled. They cast Jeremiah in the dungeon. They beheaded John the Baptist. They crucified Jesus, persecuted the apostle Paul. The whole history of the human race has been one of rebellion to the law of God.

Contemporary thought places little or no emphasis on absolutes. Standards are flexible. Everyone may decide his own standard. Not so with the Christian. God's standard is absolutely inflexible. The apostle James furnishes a very precise formula: "If a man keeps the whole law apart from one single point, he is guilty of breaking all of it" (Jas. 2:10, NEB). Not much flexibility here. Any broken law separates us from God.

The Mosaic law specified "Thou shalt" and "thou

shalt not." Jesus repeated "Thou shalt not." The apostle Paul gave many direct commands which left no room for doubt or flexibility: "Let him that stole, steal no more." "Let no corrupt communication proceed out of your mouth." "Let all bitterness, and wrath, and anger, and clamour, and evil speaking, be put away from you, with all malice." "Be ye kind one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another" (Eph. 4:28-32). To be tenderhearted and forgiving to someone who has sinned is a basic Christian virtue. We have all sinned and we all need Christian forgiveness. But this sympathetic understanding is entirely different than confounding the clean with the unclean, or the precious with the vile, or righteousness with wickedness.

A mature person who has attained a degree of Christian experience should by all means warn another of any infraction of God's law. This is a strongly taught Bible obligation: "You shall reprove your fellow-countryman frankly and so you will have no share in his guilt" (Lev. 19:17, NEB). "Correction and discipline are the way to life" (Prov. 6:23, JB). The Psalmist sought such correction: "Let the righteous smite me; it shall be a kindness: and let him reprove me; it shall be an excellent oil which shall not break my head" (Ps. 141:5).

The Christian aspirant who is not willing to listen to correction and reproof cannot expect to progress far. In an article published in the January, 1976 issue of *Christian Herald*, Doug Finn describes an experience of a young man in his church. In his words, "Joe was a much newer Christian than I, and he owned a 1955 Ford that was his pride and joy. It was customized, complete with a . . . shag carpeting on the shelf under the back window. On this carpeting sat two trick cocktail glasses. Red liquid sloshed in them precariously as he drove, yet it never spilled.

"Although Joe was lighthearted by nature, he was serious about his [church commitment]. Shortly after his election as president of our youth group, it was suggested to him that an officer of a church youth group should not display trick cocktail glasses in the back of his car; it was 'in poor taste.' Joe, while taken aback by this suggestion, removed the glasses. After that I noticed him become more somber. He seemed to be fighting some inner battle. Finally—abruptly—he left the church and, to my knowledge, has never returned."

Did Mr. Finn feel "Joe" should not have been exhorted? He does not say: but from the standpoint of Bible principle he should have been. He was a youth leader. Knowingly or unknowingly he was setting an example to others. While the cock-

tail glasses may have meant little to Joe, they might by suggestion start a weaker brother on the road to excessive drinking. This could counteract the good influence for which Joe was or should have been a symbol. A church, whose principles condemn alcoholism, would be violating its own standards by not asking Joe to remove the glasses. Furthermore, if Joe was serious in his desire to live the Christian life and help others, he would have willingly complied with the church's request. He would not have left the church with hurt feelings.

This attitude of "you don't tell me what to do" is the result of a dire lack of discipline in the home. It extends to schools where each pupil wants the right to dictate policy. It extends to colleges where no part of the student's behavior is to be censored or regulated. Unfortunately, it extends to churches where the magnanimous love of God and especially of Christ is supposed to cover all wayward behavior. In the end everything will come out all right, they are confident, if only they accept Jesus' sacrificial death as payment for all their trespasses.

This philosophy is the result of what man *thinks* God is like. It is far removed from what God is *really* like. God tells man what to do if he wants what God has to offer, and any advice offered by God's representatives should be treated with the utmost respect. To refuse Christ is to reject the God who sent Him. To be disrespectful to Christian superiors is to be disrespectful to the God who stands behind them.

Some people feel that one Christian should not listen to another. The charge is even leveled against the Christian religion that it divides families. This charge on the surface might seem true. No less a person than Jesus Himself said, "Suppose ye that I am come to give peace on earth? I tell you, Nay; but rather division: for from henceforth there shall be five in one house divided, three against two, and two against three. The father shall be divided against the son, and the son against the father; the mother against the daughter, and the daughter against the mother; the mother in law against her daughter in law, and the daughter in law against her mother in law" (Luke 12:51-53). Here is division. But is this Jesus' fault? Is it God's fault? Is it the church's fault? Emphatically *no!* The trouble lies in the dual nature of man. It is the flesh against the spirit. It is the old nature against the new. One member of the family may be striving to attain a higher plane of conduct, which brings him or her into conflict with another member who chooses the broader, easier way. This

(Continued on page 25)

Kathy
Kandor's
Korner

Un-Covering Up

“WISH we could get rid of this old piece of scrap iron,” Janet suggested rather sourly as she scrubbed away on the radiator in our dining room.

“It feels pretty friendly on some of these cold days, though,” I said, trying to offset Janet’s objections. But I understood how she felt. We both enjoyed our housecleaning projects—except for the radiators. Such ungainly looking things, and miserable to clean. The paint on this one had long since needed renewing, and it was badly chipped around the base.

“How about giving it a face-lifting today!” Janet volunteered as she sprang to her feet, suddenly enthusiastic. “A little sandpaper and paint treatment.”

“Good idea!” I agreed heartily, and Janet bounded out the door to round up the needed materials. She returned shortly, carrying a large cardboard, a few odd bits of sandpaper, and a partly used spray can of gold paint. “This will do, won’t it?” she asked as she deposited her various pieces of equipment.

Together we rolled back the rug and went to work with the sandpaper. Soon the iron beast was ready for the paint.

“Just look what a little paint does!” Janet exclaimed as she carefully sprayed the paint over the rough surface. “It covers up everything!”

“You’re going to have it looking like new very soon,” I commented as I stepped back to watch the spraying operation.

“It’s just marvelous, Mom!” And then she looked up at me so thoughtfully—“If only I could cover up my old rough character traits as easily as this!”

I’ve pondered that statement of Janet’s many times since that day’s radiator paint-job. The covering-up art is really wonderful, as far as it goes.

Living in an old house, I have had lots of practice at it. Bright print wallpaper does wonders for badly cracked plaster walls. Draperies will cover rough walls, too, and weather-worn window casings as well. Put a new piece of rug on the old board floor and you make the whole room look redecorated. Just a little paint on the door casings, and the bumps and bruises almost disappear.

“If only I could cover up my old rough character traits as easily!” Sometimes I am tempted to try. But such covering-up is wrong, one hundred percent wrong. And—it doesn’t *work*! Family and friends may never know, but that does not change anything. God sees. God knows what is underneath; and sooner or later it is sure to come to the surface.

Covering-up has its limitations, and in spiritual matters is the place to *stop*. God doesn’t want *any* of it, however “good” our reasons may seem to us. In His sight there is no such thing as a well-covered sin, or a well-disguised evil intention, or a plausible-sounding misstatement. He calls it “adding sin to sin.” When we try to cover up, we only make two sins where we had one.

Yet covering is so natural. Have you ever noticed how much easier it is to say, “I’m sorry, I made a mistake,” than to say, “Forgive me, I have sinned?”

Or have you ever stretched facts and then, when the real facts were made known, admitted quietly, “I wasn’t entirely truthful about the matter”? It sounded so much better than acknowledging simply, “I told a lie.” Or maybe you made some general statement that led others to believe you were misinformed. Or maybe it seemed so much easier to overdescribe the matter and drown your misstatement in a multitude of words. I know, I have done it, too. We somehow feel better when we do not call sin by its real name. We like to get out the old spray can of gold paint and make our rough character traits look like what they aren’t.

But God knows. And in the day that is coming, there is “nothing covered that shall not be revealed, neither hid that shall not be made known.”

So I’m throwing out the old spray can of gold paint that tempts me to cover my spiritual misdeeds. There is no use keeping it around—I’ve vowed never to use it again. Covering-up is fine for radiators, but it’s worse than worthless for sins that beset.

Sin needs calling by its real name; and then it needs *cleaning* up, not *covering* up. I’m determined to do it—won’t you try too? Remember, God can read our hearts, even underneath the layer of paint.

Yours for a spiritually uncovered me,

Kathy

MEGIDDO MESSAGE

UNDERSTANDING THE BIBLE

"Study to shew thyself approved unto God."

The Mosaic Law

THE history of the children of Israel under the guiding hand of God and His servant Moses contains both the tender loving care of a protective Father and the stern rebukes of a caring parent. Israel's relationship to their God was different from that of the other nations. Other nations chose their gods and set their own manner of worship. But Israel had not chosen God; God had chosen Israel and had established the conditions of their worship. Other nations could do as they pleased and their gods remained the same. But if Israel's God was to remain their God, Israel must make Him first in their lives, else He would no longer be with them.

The worship of one God was the first principle of the Law and to it they had agreed. God had said "Thou shalt have no other gods before me," and they in effect had said, "We will have no other gods."

This choice in no way guaranteed them the Promised Land. Only through obedience to His commands could they enter.

According to the record, disobedience, not obedience, was the rule and so many fell by the way-side that at the end of the forty years of wanderings only two of the original company remained. In the words of Paul, "With many of them God was not well pleased: for they were overthrown in the wilderness" (I Cor. 10:5). According to the writer to the Hebrews, they "entered not in because of unbelief," or as a marginal reference translates it, "because of disobedience" (Heb. 4:6).

In our last lesson we studied the Law up to the time of Christ. In this issue we will complete our study of the Mosaic law, further considering the ending of the old Law and studying briefly the law which we as Christians are under today.

V. THE LAW TODAY

Because the law of Moses was only a national law, a law for the people of Israel, it is no longer binding today. It ceased by limitation, that limit

February, 1976

being explained by the apostle Paul in Gal. 3:24-25: The law was "our schoolmaster to bring us unto Christ, . . . but after that faith is come, we are no longer under a schoolmaster." Again according to Paul, "It was added because of transgressions, till the seed should come to whom the promise was made" (Gal. 3:19). Christ was the promised seed and He was "the end of the law" (Rom. 10:4).

Christ fulfilled or finished the Law, "blotting out the handwriting of ordinances that was against us, which was contrary to us, and took it out of the way, nailing it to his cross" (Col. 2:14). Christ's death marked the end of the Law. It was symbolized with the rending of the veil of the temple at the hour of His death. The veil had kept the sacred precincts of the most holy place hidden. Only the high priest could enter behind the veil, and that only once each year. Rending the veil signified the end of the Levitical priesthood and the whole Mosaic system. Only the "new and living way" remained, of which Christ was and is the High Priest. Through Him every believer has access to God at all times.

The Mosaic law remains today only as a part of historical Scripture, not as a rule of life.

A. The Two Laws Contrasted

Both the apostle Paul and the writer to the Hebrews made frequent contrasts between Moses' law and the law of faith. A careful study of these writings leaves no doubt that the Mosaic law was terminated in favor of the better law, the law of faith. In his second letter to the Corinthians, Paul describes the Law as a "ministration of death, written and engraven in stones," a glory which "was to be done away." He then says, "For if that which is done away [Moses' law] was glorious, much more that which remaineth [the law of faith] is glorious" (II Cor. 3:7, 11). Only the Ten Commandment law was "written and engraven in stones." It was termed a "ministration of death" because death was the penalty for breaking many of the commandments.

"He taketh away the first, that he may establish the second" (Heb. 10:9). Here the two Laws are

contrasted as **first** and **second**. The “first” was the Law given to Israel and when it was taken away there was a complete change of the law. Christ is the “mediator of the new testament” which superseded the old order that had been given on Mount Sinai. Christ is our High Priest, our intercessor through whom we come to God.

Let us consider a few points concerning the old Law, comparing them with God’s superior law, the “law of faith,” or the “royal law” (see below).

Point-by-point comparison shows the superiority

of the law of faith. Moses’ law was good for its time and served its purpose well, but it was only “a shadow of good things to come.” “The law [Mosaic] made nothing perfect, but the bringing in of a better hope did” (Heb. 7:19). Its sacrifices, altars, sin-offerings and tabernacle all pointed forward to the “better hope,” the “new and living way” in Christ.

B. The Commandments Today

Many today are horrified at the thought that the

The Mosaic Law

- **The Law was given only to Israel.** Speaking of the Law, Moses said: “The Lord made not this covenant with our fathers, but with us, even us, who are all of us here alive this day” (Deut. 5:3). God made this covenant with and delivered the Law to the nation of Israel, and after that nation passed out of existence, the Law was obsolete.
- **The Law was limited to temporal benefits.** It was first and foremost a civil law to civilize. Obedience to it guaranteed temporal prosperity only. “For if there had been a law given which could have given life, verily righteousness should have been by the law” (Gal. 3:21). The Law could not give life.
- **The Law was for a limited time.** It was given “until the seed [Christ] should come.” It was both ceremonial and moral, but nowhere do we find the two parts separated. The whole Law expired at once. Its laws were but “external regulations applying until the time of the new order” (Heb. 9:10, NIV). The Law ended with Christ.
- **The Law covered only outward acts.** Under the Law, a man must commit the act to be guilty. It made no provision for cleansing the thoughts or the heart, a necessary part of perfection of character.
- **The Law could not take away sin.** Being a national law, a civil law, Moses’ law could never “make the comers thereunto perfect,” but was “a shadow of good things to come” (Heb. 10:1). The old Law could not give salvation because it was only for Israel.

The Law Of Faith

- **The law of faith applies to all who voluntarily place themselves under it.** Where Moses’ law was limited to natural Israel, the law of faith applies to all covenant-makers, regardless of nationality. God is no respecter of persons; whosoever will may come.
- **The law of faith offers eternal reward.** The old Law guaranteed only temporal prosperity at best, but the law of faith obeyed, promises “an hundredfold now in this time, . . . and in the world to come eternal life” (Mark 10:30).
- **The law of faith has no time limit.** God’s law, “Walk before me, and be thou perfect,” has been in effect from the beginning of His plan for the earth. The law of faith will remain throughout the day of salvation.
- **The law of faith reaches to the thoughts and intents of the heart.** An evil thought must precede the evil act, hence evil thoughts defile. Jesus in Mark 7:21-23 revealed that the new law covers these. Perfection is not only outward, but inward. “The word of God is quick, and powerful, . . . and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart” (Heb. 4:12).
- **The law of faith can cleanse from sin.** God’s higher law, when applied, is able to make “pure in heart,” (Matt. 5:8); it cleanses “from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit” (II Cor. 7:1), and through “patient continuance in well doing” it prepares the doer “for glory and honour and immortality, eternal life” (Rom. 2:7).

Ten Commandments as such are no longer in force. But the fact that the old Law and its Ten Commandments has been nullified by no means leaves the Christian today without a rule of law by which to live. Today we have the law of faith, the royal law, the law which existed from the beginning and to which Moses' law was added. Included in it are nine of the original Ten Commandments, the fourth commandment concerning the Sabbath being the only one that is not reiterated in the New Testament.

1. The Ten Commandments reiterated. Although the actual Ten Commandments are no longer in force, their counterpart is to be found in other parts of the Scripture, hence there is no need for the original.

a. "Thou shalt have no other gods before me." Jesus upheld the validity of the first commandment: "Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God and him only shalt thou serve" (Matt. 4:10).

b. "Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image." This second commandment is repeated in I John 5:21: "Little children, keep yourselves from idols." An idol can be anything that comes between the Christian and God. Again, Jesus' words are plain: "But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness" (Matt. 6:33).

c. The third commandment, "Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord thy God in vain," is made stronger by Jesus: "Swear not at all" (Matt. 5:33-35), or as rendered in the New English Bible, "You are not to swear at all— . . . Plain 'Yes' or 'No' is all you need to say."

d. The fourth commandment, "Remember the sabbath day, to keep it holy," is the only one of the ten not repeated in some form in the New Testament.

e. The fifth commandment, "Honour thy father and thy mother" is not only repeated, it is amplified: "Children, obey your parents in the Lord: for this is right. Honour thy father and mother; which is the first commandment with promise; . . . and, ye fathers, provoke not your children to wrath" (Eph. 6:1-2, 4).

f. The sixth commandment, "Thou shalt not kill," is not only repeated but extended. Murderers are pictured outside the Kingdom of God in Gal. 5:21 and Rev. 21:8, and John stated that "whosoever hateth his brother is a murderer" (I John 3:12).

g. The seventh commandment, "Thou shalt not commit adultery," is also expanded by Jesus as we learned in our previous lesson: "Whosoever looketh on a woman to lust after her hath committed adultery with her already in his heart" (Matt. 5:28).

h. The eighth commandment, "Thou shalt not

steal," is made equally forceful by Paul in Eph. 4:28: "Let him that stole steal no more." Thieves are also listed as among those that shall not inherit the Kingdom (I Cor. 6:10). Jesus greatly expanded the command in John 10: "I am the door, . . . He that entereth not by the door into the sheepfold, but climbeth up some other way, the same is a thief and a robber" (vs. 9, 1).

i. The ninth command, "Thou shalt not bear false witness," is made equally strong by John the Baptist: "Do violence to no man, neither accuse any falsely" (Luke 3:14). Lying, which is but another form of bearing false witness, is forbidden by many texts of Scripture.

j. The tenth commandment, "Thou shalt not covet," is given in essence in many verses of Scripture. The opposite of covetousness is contentment, and the Christian is admonished to be content, "for godliness with contentment is great gain." "Keep your lives free from the love of money and be content with what you have," was the advice of the writer to the Hebrews (Heb. 13:5, NIV).

What need have we for the old Ten Commandment law? None, for we have a guide for life without it. The commandments given above from the New Testament are but a very small sampling of those to be found outside the Law. Commands are to be found throughout the New Testament—plus many in the Old. For a comprehensive list of the requirements for Christian living, read the Sermon on the Mount which encompasses Matthew 5 through 7. Read Romans 12, I Corinthians 6, Galatians 5 and 6, Ephesians 4 through 6, Colossians 3, Titus 2 and II Peter 1. No, we do not lack for rules to live by without the Mosaic law!

C. What Others Believe

Many present-day church bodies still hold to belief in the old Law, at least in the Ten Commandments. Some distinguish between that part of the Law which is moral and that which is ceremonial, claiming that the ceremonial was done away but that the moral was preserved. There are also some who still hold to keeping the feasts established under the Law.

Are these feasts still to be kept? Was the sabbath to be binding until the Kingdom should come? Is it important that we keep the seventh day? We will look at the beliefs and the reasoning of two of the best known seventh-day keepers.

1. The Adventists. The Seventh-Day Adventists, who by their name make their profession to keep the 7th-day Sabbath, are perhaps the best known among sabbatarians.

Adventists divide the law of Moses into two

parts, that which was moral and that which was ceremonial. To them, the moral part is the Decalog, the Ten Commandments, the part "written and engraven in stone." The ceremonial includes the rest of the Law, including all sacrifices, rituals, ceremonies and feast days. According to their belief, that which was ceremonial was done away, but the Decalog or Ten Commandment law was to be a perpetual covenant to be observed by all people for all time. Hence, the Sabbath, being the fourth commandment, would be still binding.

Let us examine this belief in the light of the Scriptures.

Where in the Bible do we find the Law divided between "moral" and "ceremonial"? **Such a division is not to be found. The whole law was moral when it was in force.** It was immoral for an Israelite to break any part of it, whether it be a command included in the Ten or one given at a later time. Laws given through Moses after the receipt of the tables of stone were just as binding as those on the tablets and were punishable with the same severity. **The division between "moral" and "ceremonial" is a division made by man and not by God and has no Biblical foundation whatever.** Jesus said "one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law, till all be fulfilled" (Matt. 5:18). Not one part was to be removed until all was fulfilled. Jesus said He came not to destroy, but to fulfill the Law. When He had completed His work He had fulfilled the Law and it was all, not partly, taken away. Nowhere in the writings of Paul, who had much to say about the Law being taken away, do we find anything to indicate any part of the Law that remained. **"Christ is the end of the law,"** said Paul—not "Christ is the end of the ceremonial law," but the end of the Law, the whole Law.

Likewise, the Epistle to the Hebrews contrasts the two covenants, the two laws, but never is there a division made between two parts, moral and ceremonial. Always it is a case of one replacing another: "He taketh away the first, that he may establish the second"; "For the law made nothing perfect, but the bringing in of a better hope did"; "The law [was] a shadow of good things to come"—**not the ceremonial law, but the Law** (Heb. 10:9; 7:19; 10:1).

No, we can find no basis in the Scriptures for keeping any part of the old Law. It has been superseded by Christ's way, which involves the sacrifice of our old ways, a complete obedience to the commands of the royal law, the law of faith.

2. **The Worldwide Church of God.** This church, better known to many as the followers of Herbert W. Armstrong, likewise holds to part of the old

Law. They not only keep the seventh day as the Sabbath, but they also observe many of the feasts as given to Israel, claiming that these were likewise given for a perpetual keeping by God's people.

Mr. Armstrong holds that the Ten Commandment law has been in force since creation, that God merely reiterated these ten basic commands to Israel at Mount Sinai and that it was not a law especially designed for Israel. He finds further significance in that "God gave the Ten Commandments directly to the people of Israel."

Regarding the feast days, it is Mr. Armstrong's contention that the feasts of Leviticus 23 were not feasts for Israel only but were God's feasts, to be kept perpetually, and that such was being done in New Testament times.

The answer to the Adventists concerning the end of the Law should suffice for Mr. Armstrong's claim for the 7th-day Sabbath.

Concerning the Law's having been in force since creation, Mr. Armstrong fails to recognize that there is more than one law mentioned in the Bible. True, there has been law in force since God began His plan on this earth, but not necessarily since Creation. The law given to the patriarchs was not Moses' law, but God's higher law, the one to which Jesus referred in Matthew 22 when asked "Which is the great commandment in the law?" For a reply, Jesus quoted Deut. 6:5 coupled with Lev. 19:18, and added: "On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets." Neither of these is in the Decalog, but the Ten Commandment law "hangs" on this higher, superior law. **This is the law that has been in force from the beginning.**

Regarding the feast days, they were part of the Law for Israel. There is nothing to indicate that they survived when the Law was taken away. Neither Paul nor the writer to the Hebrews makes any mention of their survival. The Law was not permanent or unchangeable. Rather, the author of Hebrews stated that "there is made of necessity a change also of the law" (Heb. 7:12).

Christians today are not under the Law. Neither are they governed by the Aaronic priesthood. We are under the priesthood of Melchisedec (Heb. 7:14-19), with Christ as our High Priest. "The ministry Jesus has received is as superior to theirs [the Aaronic priesthood] as the covenant of which he is mediator is superior to the old one, and it is founded on better promises" (Heb. 7:28; 8:1-2, 6, NIV).

Reprints of these studies are available upon request.

Glorying

in the

CROSS

by Percy J. Thatcher
(Pastor 1945-1958)

THE literal cross of Christ has been preached so much and its image has become so fixed in our minds as the center and source of our salvation that we can hardly get rid of the idea. We received it by tradition from our fathers; and people wear a literal cross on their breast as an ornament, or look at it on their church spire, thinking it represents the cross on which Jesus was crucified, and that through it only is salvation to be obtained.

For the three years of His ministry Jesus taught the multitudes, and discoursed to His disciples, but in the divine Record of those teachings we cannot find one single reference to His death on the literal cross. He failed to leave on the minds of those who heard Him even one impression sufficiently strong to merit recording in the living Gospels. Nowhere is recorded even the least utterance that His death on the literal cross was to appease the wrath of God and set us free from the plague of Adam's sin.

The wooden cross on which Christ was crucified will never save anyone. It did not save even Christ. It was simply His last act of obedience. Jesus knew the Jews sought His life, and He prayed to be released from that ordeal if it were the Father's will. How strange that He should utter such a prayer if that were indeed the whole purpose of His coming! But since release was not the Father's will, He obediently submitted so as to finish the work given Him to do. It crowned His life work of humble submission and willing obedience. When He had given His life, He had given all.

Christ Preached A Cross of Self-Denial

The first time Christ made any reference to the cross is in Matthew 10. He said, "He that loveth father or mother more than me is not worthy of me: and he that loveth son or daughter more than

"God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world" —Paul (Gal. 6:14).

me is not worthy of me. And he that taketh not his cross, and followeth after me, is not worthy of me." Here is a cross, a very real cross. You must love Me ("I am the way, the truth, and the life"—John 14:6) above all else. Is that not a cross to bear, day in and day out? It is to place our love for God and righteousness above every earthly attachment, to have no ungodly affection, to prize our privilege of knowing His Word and working to gain endless life above everything else. That is a cross, and that is the only cross Jesus ever preached—a cross of self-denial, a cross to take up daily. It is the crucifixion of all ungodliness in each of us.

A man who is taking up his cross is becoming more kind and gentle every day; but he finds that everything does not go as he might like it to. He has trouble. He may be opposed by father or mother, son or daughter, wife or sister, because he is trying to live godly, because he is trying to live above the sinning and iniquity around him.

This is a cross.

"Then," said Jesus—and you can make up your mind it is true—"If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross and follow me" (Matt. 16:24). Here is a cross to be taken up, not only taken up but gloried in. The man who does not deny himself of his own evil desires and inclinations is not taking up his cross and can never be saved.

The Cross According to Paul, A Death to Sin

So many would rather picture the cross with Jesus upon it than to think of a cross which *they* must carry; but we have no such option.

Paul made clear that the literal cross of Christ was not all-important. The cross which brings salvation is a cross which all of Christ's faithful fol-

lowers can share. He testified, "For in that he died, he died unto sin once: but in that he liveth, he liveth unto God." And to show we must die the same death, he continues: "Likewise reckon ye also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord." This is the conclusion of the thought stated earlier in the chapter: "Knowing this, that our old man is crucified with him, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin" (Rom. 6:6-11). Note that "*our* old man is crucified *with* him."

In order to be free from sin as Christ was freed from it, we have to die the same kind of death! Not on a literal cross, but on a spiritual cross that we must carry. We must suffer the death of our own sinful natures.

For even more emphasis that it was not the Calvary death that avails, Paul said: "I am crucified with Christ" (Gal. 2:20). Not only did he acknowledge Christ's death to sin, but he said of himself, I am dying with Christ. I am becoming crucified with Him.

Not only did Paul willingly endure the same crucifixion as His Lord, but he *gloried* in it. "God forbid," he wrote, "that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world" (Gal. 6:14). And since Paul gloried in the cross, the cross must become our glory, too; for Paul wrote, "Copy me as I copy Christ" (I Cor. 11:1, Moffatt). This, then, is the deep lesson of the cross for us, the lesson which this apostle sent especially for us Gentiles.

For men to glory in something is perfectly natural. They glory in various things, according to their possessions and dispositions. Some glory in their wealth, some in their learning, some in their skill, some in their ancestry, some in their power over other men. Some glory in their popularity, many in their own righteousness. And alas! many glory in that which should be their shame.

There is no wrong in holding certain privileges and possessions in high esteem. This is man's portion which he hath under the sun. If a man has amassed a comfortable fortune by industry, hard labor and prudent foresight and by these qualities of self-reliance and ardor has gained a position of leadership, with applause and lands and money, these are possessions he may guard with jealous care. Yet not one of these is worth enough to justify a man's considering it his chief end and his highest good. If this is all he chooses to glory in, the end will be bitter; for the temporal, the present arrangement, is passing away. What a

man glories in he lives for and would be willing to die for. His love for what he glories in is the supreme affection of his heart. It is above all other loves, even above the love of life itself.

Some of the degrees of attachment that human-kind are capable of are Inclination, Fondness, Love and Glory. It is for you and me to choose something that is worthy of the highest degree of attachment, something that will stand when the fleeting things have passed away, something that will abide when the storms of life have swept away the structures of human thought.

These words, "glorying in the cross of Christ," come from one who was a mighty scholar; but he never gloried in his scholarship; a Jew of the tribe of Benjamin, but he did not glory in his illustrious lineage; born to be a leader of men, yet he never sought personal aggrandizement. In all his glorying he had but one theme: to glory in the cross of Christ, to be crucified unto the world and the world unto him.

Paul never gloried in the cross of Calvary's Hill, the Greek cross, the Maltese cross, or the Rose cross; nor did he glory in a cross carved from wood, stone or metal. He gloried in the cross of self-denial, the cross of reconciliation, the cross which made him one with God in thought and purpose. It was a cross that brought crucifixion to his own lower nature, a cross that brought the mortification of the deeds of the body; a cross that brought the shedding of blood, a death to sin. This is the cross and the only cross that can reconcile us to God. This is the only cross that will bring us to peace with God both now and through all eternity.

"If any man will be my disciple, let him take up his cross"—and not only take it up but bear it joyfully, glorying in it. Yes, glory in it. For it will separate us from a wicked world and make us a friend of God; it will cause us to pass from ignorance to knowledge, from foolishness to wisdom, from licentiousness to restraint, from lust to purity, from godlessness to God.

This is the cross which Paul said was a stumbling block to the wise of this world and foolishness to others; "For the preaching of the cross is to them that perish foolishness"—what about the literal cross is considered foolish by the religious world? The literal cross is adored, revered, even worshiped. "We preach Christ crucified, unto the Jews a stumblingblock, and unto the Greeks foolishness" (I Cor. 1:18, 23).

But let us thank God that this cross, this cross of self-denial and discipline, has met all the forces that have been hurled against it, whether Judaism,

or pagan or papal philosophy. For centuries the religious world has been singing,

*In the cross of Christ I glory,
Tow'ring o'er the wrecks of time, . . .*

but the fact is, they have never yet caught the vision of that cross that brings self-denial and patience, suffering and the loss of all things men might count great, that we might become reconciled to God. Men glory in the literal cross on which Jesus died, or a mere effigy of it, gilded and upon the breast or upon the mantel piece, upon the altar or the church spire. But no matter how beautiful it be, there is nothing there in which to glory.

Benefits of the Cross

Where did Paul exhibit even a splinter or a nail from the cross of Calvary? The answer comes ringing back, Nowhere. The cross our beloved Paul preached is the way to an endless life. It is the way to God. It is the Eternal's method of reconciling man unto Himself.

Oh, the power of the cross of Christ! It is life-imparting, joy-bringing, peace-giving. It is the power of God unto salvation. It is the whole gospel of God. My fellow Christians, are you glorying in that cross today? It will lift you above the low, the groveling, the sensual. It will lift you from the lowest stream of human thought. It will make you right and keep you right. And it will bring you at last into perfect harmony with God.

This is the cross in which Christ gloried. The Psalmist said of Him prophetically, "Then said I, Lo, I come: in the volume of the book it is written of me, I delight to do thy will, O my God: yea, thy law is within my heart" (Ps. 40:7-8). What glorying in the cross! "I delight to do thy will, O my God." This was our Master's lifelong attitude. "I seek not mine own glory, but the glory of Him that sent me." This was His cross, His glory, and His delight. See our great Example glorying in the cross that brought death, a death to sin. Are we willing to take up this same cross? not only take it up and bear it, but *glory* in it? Whether it brings trials, disappointments, losses, sacrifice, bear it every moment, every hour, every day. For it will work out for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory.

Fellow Christians, if we suffer with Him, we shall also reign with Him. This is the old rugged cross, the mighty fortress and bulwark of primitive Christianity; it is the cross that leads home. Millions have tried to get home some other way, but they soon lose the path.

"Many," said the beloved Paul, "walk, of whom

Discipline, A Must

If we want to be worthy of Christ's honor, we will have to resign ourselves to a great measure of discipline and sacrifice.

Christian discipleship demands it. We can't have everything. Even if it leaves us uncomfortable, some things have to go—our passions, our caprices, our time, our possessions, even our inherent "right" to think and speak as we please—all will be affected to some extent. If we would measure up to Christ's demands, we must live sacrificially.

The human tendency is to rebel against such demands. What we have is our own, and we do not wish God or anyone else to tell us what to do with it. Restrictions seem so unnecessary, even unbearable. We want to be called servants of Christ's, but we resist His lordship in our lives. We have an excessively high regard for our personal liberties and so refuse to subject our will to that of another.

God has great and measureless blessings in store, but they are not free for all. They are reserved for those who prepare to receive them by truly denying themselves, taking up their cross and following Christ—daily.

I have told you often, and now tell you even weeping, that they are the enemies of the cross of Christ, . . . whose glory is in their shame, who mind earthly things" (Phil. 3:18-19). The cross of Christ separates from the low, the groveling, the sensual things—another sure evidence that the "cross of Christ" to Paul was more than the literal cross on which Christ was crucified.

Do you really glory in the cross of Christ? If so, then you will not go through the world complaining and apologizing for being a Christian. If we really glory in bearing this cross, there will be no more low-toned and sickly religion among us. Wry faces will disappear. We will sing even at midnight as we follow in the steps of our Master, bearing our cross on and on till at last we can lay it down for a crown.

Danger in Unconfessed Sin

When we do not glory in the cross, we are in danger, serious danger. Sin must be recognized, confessed and forsaken. As long as we are ashamed of the cross, and refuse to deal with it as God would have us, our sin remains unconfessed and

(Continued on page 23)

Improve that Mood!

Your home, my home, every home has its mood, its atmosphere, its own mysterious something that makes it different from every other home. It is hard to define, but you can feel it the moment you enter. It may be a mood of harmony and peace; or it may be one of strife and contention. A home may be enveloped with frustrations and a feeling of futility, or it may stimulate love and confidence.

What is the mood of your home? of mine?

I was thinking about this the other day as I watched my youngest child quietly at play in the middle of the living-room floor. Apparently content and happy, I could not help but wonder just what she was learning that moment from the atmosphere I was creating.

As parents, we are consciously or unconsciously creating a mood in our homes all the time. This mood is being set mostly by our own attitudes—attitudes toward life in general, toward home and possessions, toward our children, our neighbors, our visitors, ourselves, and—most important—toward God. The mood of our home is a direct result of the type of persons we are, and it has a big effect on the type of persons we want our children to grow up to be.

In so many modern homes, the TV, the radio and phonograph set the mood from one end of the day to the other. These cause noisy, disordered households and interfere with communication between family members.

Think of the unpeaceful mood in the home that is filled with strife, where tempers explode freely, petty grievances are continually voiced and family members are chafed by the friction of inconsiderateness. Such a harsh atmosphere breeds anxiety, antagonism, nervousness, discontent, and insecurity.

Do our homes reflect any of the noise, chaos and confusion so common in today's world? If so, we should devise a plan for immediate change. For the longer a wrong mood prevails, the more difficult it is to change.

The atmosphere in which we raise our children is up to us! And it is a responsibility we cannot afford to leave to chance, to mere outward circumstances or whatever may happen in the course of the day. It is our duty to make a conscious effort

to see that our homes provide the proper Christian influence for our children's mental, moral and spiritual growth.

The best way we have found to improve the atmosphere of our home is to live closer to God ourselves. For the more devotion to God and His purposes that we show in our lives, the more will be reflected in the young lives that touch ours all the time.

We find a spiritual atmosphere is a real help both to ourselves and to our children, as we meet the demands of everyday living together. It greatly increases the harmony and happiness of our home, and helps us all in more rapid development of genuine Christian character.

Try visiting *your* home as if you were a stranger and see if you can feel the mood. And then, maybe, you can improve it and make life richer for all of you. ●●



I'm Thinking

I. Can you choose the right answer?

1. Who was Sapphira the wife of?
John Ananias Chrispus Cornelius
2. Who said, "Silver and gold have I none" to the lame man?
Peter John Barnabas Paul
3. How was Stephen killed?
beheaded stoned with the sword burned at the stake
4. What king trembled at the words of Paul?
Felix Caesar Festus Augustus
5. How long did Paul dwell in his own hired house?
7 years 29 days 2 years 1 year

6. Who said, "I have not shunned to declare unto you all the counsel of God"?
John Paul Peter James
7. Who said, "Sirs, what must I do to be saved?"
the goldsmith Philip the jailer a fisherman
8. The people of what city "searched the scriptures daily"?
Athens Rome Berea Thessalonica
9. At what place was Peter when Cornelius sent for him?
Thessalonica Jerusalem Joppa Damascus
10. What woman and her household were baptized after hearing Paul preach?
Phoebe Lydia Priscilla Mary

Answers:

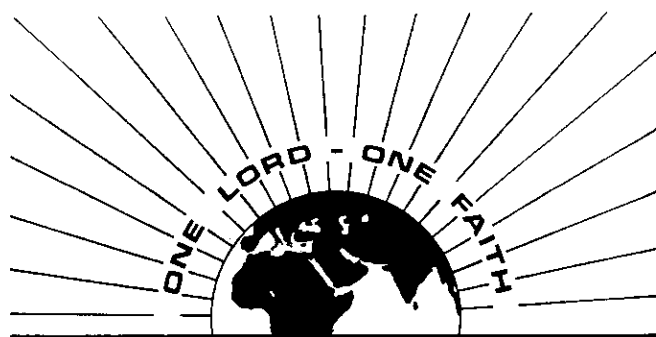
1. Ananias (Acts 5:1) 2. Peter (Acts 3:6) 3. stoned (Acts 7:59) 4. Felix (Acts 24:25) 5. 2 years (Acts 28:30) 6. Paul (Acts 20:27) 7. the jailer (Acts 16:30) 8. Berea (Acts 17:11) 9. Joppa (Acts 10:5) 10. Lydia (Acts 16:14-15).

II. Can you unscramble the letters in these plagues and then put them in the right order?

1. losib
2. ialh
3. obold
4. ksarsnde
5. uossctl
6. srfgo
7. efls
8. tadhe
9. ciel
10. rinumar

Answers:

1. boils 2. hail 3. blood 4. darkness 5. locusts 6. frogs 7. flies 8. death 9. ice 10. murrain
Order of plagues: (see Exodus, chapters 7-12)
blood, frogs, lice, flies, murrain, boils, hail, locusts, darkness, death



Beyond Death-?

You and I are part of a big family—a very big family. In fact, there are an estimated four billion of us, all alive, all breathing, all human. All of us have come into existence through the operation of specific laws of nature, marvelous laws which the great Creator set in motion ages ago. All of us live and continue to live through His providential care. If He were to withdraw any one of many factors on which we depend—light, air, water, food, etc.—we would all perish. In the words of the sacred writer, He "giveth us richly all things to enjoy."

God is generous to His human family even to give them life at all. None of us can say we deserve it, or merit it, or earn it. However much or little any man gets of life and experience is all gain, so far as he is concerned. For whether we ever appeared upon the scene or not, the world would still be here. It was in motion ages before we arrived and it will continue after we are gone. We should be deeply grateful to God for letting us get a glimpse of this beautiful world of His creating and see and experience even a small number of its wonders. We are indebted to God for everything.

But our sojourn here, however grand and thrilling, is only temporary. In the natural course of events, all living beings must sooner or later depart; all are mortal and subject to death.

What then? What follows the end of this life? What can we realistically expect?

For our information on this subject we have very few sources. No man on earth can help us, for no living person has experienced death and been restored to life. To learn about this all-important subject we must go to God and what He has revealed in His written Word, the Bible.

MANY people have a vague idea of some form of continued life after death. They imagine a disembodied spirit, a personality, a consciousness or some other non-material state in which the real person continues to exist. (Continued next page)

However, the Word of God does not support any such idea. It says clearly, "in death there is no remembrance" (Ps. 6:5); "the dead know not anything" (Eccl. 9:5); when a man dies, his thoughts "perish" (Ps. 146:3-4).

Now if there is no consciousness in death, as the Bible plainly teaches, what then? Is there no hope for the future? Are all the dead perished forever? Is this life all there is?

The answer is an individual matter; for some it is "yes," for others it is a definite "no." Actually, the answer is every man's *choice*!

How can this be?

To understand, we must look at all of history and mankind from God's vantage point. God is the great, benevolent Creator, giving mortal life to all. But He is not concerned with all the people who inhabit His planet. He is concerned with only those who are interested in Him and what He has to offer. God's whole purpose in creating and populating this planet has been to find a few individuals who will be suitable material for the permanent arrangement, the eternal Kingdom, which He has planned. He will someday have a planet filled with people glorifying Him and living in prosperity and happiness.

God has set before men a very special offer—a better life, an eternal life, a life in a glorified state in which they can be "equal unto the angels." This superior, future life is called immortality.

The Bible has much to say about immortal life and all that will accompany it. It is a life free from sorrow, free from sickness, disappointment, suffering and death. The Revelator described it this way: "And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away" (Rev. 21:4). Paul said it is the goal for which we seek, even "glory and honour and immortality, eternal life" (Rom. 2:7).

The Psalmist described the immortal state as abundant satisfaction of every conceivable desire: "They shall be abundantly satisfied with the fatness of thy house; and thou shalt make them drink of the river of thy pleasures. For with thee is the fountain of life: in thy light shall we see light" (Ps. 36:8-9). It is life in which no wish is left unfulfilled: "But as it is written, Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him" (I Cor. 2:9).

Immortality involves a physical change. The angels are now immortal, that is, they cannot die. They are no longer flesh and blood as we know it,

but some superior substance not subject to disease and decay. The inheritors of God's Kingdom will be changed in a similar way, for "flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God" (I Cor. 15:50). But when the "corruptible shall have put on incorruption, and this mortal shall have put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, Death is swallowed up in victory" (I Cor. 15:54).

The change to immortal life is the reward which Jesus will bring every faithful servant when He returns to earth. As the apostle Paul wrote, Christ will come and "change our vile [corruptible] body, that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious [immortal] body" (Phil. 3:20-21).

Immortality is the reward. Immortality is God's offer to men. But to what men will it be given?

All mankind receive this life as a free gift, irrespective of their character or what they may do with it. But the immortal life, life in the world to come is reserved for those who make the proper, God-directed use of this life. Long ago God set before men His law, with the offer, "Obey and live; disobey and die." By this method and on this basis He has been sifting through the ages, selecting the best from among earthborns. Through obedience to God and His law there is nothing of real value to lose and everything to gain, even to life eternal! So why not obey God and live!

But strangely, the majority have not felt this way. For the obedience God requires often means giving up the things that are seen for promises that can be seen only by faith. It means relinquishing one's hold on the visible present and its prospects of success and investing oneself and one's interests totally in the invisible future. This is necessary, because "the things that are seen are temporal." Only the "things which are not seen are eternal" (II Cor. 4:18). This is one main reason why the majority have not been willing to make the investment—they lack faith in what they cannot see.

But in reality, this long-term investment in the life to come is the only escape from the state of unconsciousness and non-entity which we call death. Apart from God there is no prospect of anything beyond.

"Therefore," says God, "choose life"—and obedience. ● ●

A cripple on the right road is better off than a fast runner on the wrong road.

Glorying in the Cross

(Continued from page 19)

unforgiven. And we can be sure there is deceit in us. We first begin by not allowing ourselves to be condemned; then we deny the sin; then we pull every sort and manner of string to cover it up. To do this we have to use pretexts and we follow crooked courses as the habit of self-deception grows. It is first self-deception; we deceive ourselves. Then, having deceived ourselves, all other deception comes easily. We have to keep up a good appearance, and in order to do this we conceal and evade and put on disguises. In the words of the familiar poem,

*Oh, what a tangled web we weave
When first we practice to deceive.*

As the process goes on, it ends in lying and hypocrisy, and the result is spiritual disaster.

We see the tendency to deceit even in small children. They conceal what they know their elders disapprove of, and magnify their virtues. The same tendency is seen in youth and middle age as men resort to a variety of means and tricks to keep up a false show before their fellowmen. It is confirmed with advancing years and becomes hardened cement in old age. Oh, blessed is the man whose sin is forgiven, in whose spirit there is no guile, no deceit, no false pretense.

The Cross of Strong Temptation

Some ask, "Why am I tempted so strongly?" It is because God wants to make a man of you. God does not want weakness, flabbiness, uselessness. So He has given us barriers to climb, foes to fight, storms to breast, crosses to bear. Many will never put forth the effort to develop the strength to do it, but they who have clean hands will, and they will grow stronger and stronger with every attempt. And they will at last lay hold on eternal life.

Resolved . . .

If we would imitate our great Example, would follow in His footsteps, we must bear the cross He bore, bear it on and on over the rugged pathway of life. It will not always be easy; bearing this cross will mean sacrifice. The man who gloried in being crucified with Christ wrote with urgent pleading, "I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service. And be not conformed to

this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good and acceptable, and perfect, will of God" (Rom. 12:1-2). God requires a sacrifice at our hand, and we should never forget that "the sacrifices of God are a broken spirit: a broken and a contrite heart, O God, thou wilt not despise" (Ps. 51:17).

Let us go forth today determined to obey God, to bear the cross, to make the sacrifice. We want a faith that will prove itself in self-denying duty. We want a faith that is working, for "faith without works is dead." We want a cross that, borne faithfully to the end, will gain for us a crown.

How shall we, you and I, find and bear this cross of Christ? Paul, the great apostle, struck the key-note of his whole religious life when in the flush of his first feelings he cried out, "Lord, what wouldest thou have me to do?" And so he answers our query today: "Make yourself an example to believers in speech and behaviour, in love, fidelity, and purity." Your time, your talents, your energy, your *all* belongs to the Lord. Make your dedication to Him the more complete. If you have been neglecting prayer, go home and set up your altar. "Make these matters your business and your absorbing interest" (I Tim. 4:12, 15, NEB). Lay hold of the work the harder. Grasp your cross, whatever it be, and bear it to the end, and in that great Day you will be able to lay it down for a crown. ●●

ABIB Is Coming!

We are happy to announce the approach of another sacred New Year, the season which on the ancient Hebrew calendar was distinguished by its special festivities and spiritual revival. It began with the first new moon following the spring equinox, which occurs this year on March 30. Therefore, Abib First this year will commence the evening of March 30 and continue through March 31.

Special programs and services at the Megiddo Mission Church will commemorate the dawn of the New Year on March 30 and 31, at which time we will also commemorate the birth of Christ.

Plan now to join us at this season—you should find it spiritually refreshing! ●●

Questions

"Is God's love conditional, or is it unconditional, or both? I feel sure there is an answer to this question. I want to make sure I get it straight."

When you speak of "God's love," I assume you refer to God's love toward men, or mankind in general, or toward us.

There is a sense in which God's love for mankind is unconditional. He has set in motion certain laws by which the human race may be sustained. God sends "rain from heaven, and fruitful seasons, filling our hearts with food and gladness" (Acts 14:17). He makes "his sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust" (Matt. 5:45)—this aspect of God's love is definitely unconditional. However men behave or misbehave, they share alike, according to time and chance.

But when the Bible speaks of the love of God toward men, it is usually speaking of a love that is conditional. Or if it is love which singles out a certain person for a certain task or a certain blessing, it is love which must be proven before that person can receive the fruit of that love.

The phrase "I love them that love me" (Prov. 8:17) summarizes the general condition necessary to receiving the love of God. God loves us as we love Him, as we show our love toward Him by living in obedience to His laws (I John 5:3; John 14:15). God loves us when we show in our lives the virtues He honors. God loves righteousness (Ps. 11:7), and "he loveth him that followeth after righteousness" (Prov. 15:9). He loves judgment (Ps. 37:28), and He requires that men "do justly" (Mic. 6:8). God loves mercy, and He wants men who also "love mercy" (Mic. 6:8). "The Lord taketh pleasure in them that fear him, in those that hope in his mercy" (Ps. 147:11). All this is conditional love.

God shows His love toward us in setting before us "life and good, and death and evil." He shows His love by making available to us "exceeding great

and precious promises" (II Pet. 1:2-3), even "fulness of joy" and "pleasures for evermore" (Ps. 16:11), "glory and honour and immortality, eternal life" (Rom. 2:7). But receiving the fruit of this love depends wholly on our response: We must meet His conditions of obedience before these benefits can be ours. We must become His friends by doing as He commands (John 15:14).

"You say Elijah will come and raise the dead and have them ready for Christ. The Bible does not teach this. It says Elijah will turn the people back to God."

The Bible does not say specifically that Elijah will raise the dead, but from what it does say we feel justified in this conclusion. First Thessalonians 4:16-17 reads: "For 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 first."

The term "archangel" means "chief messenger," as it is rendered in *Wilson's Emphatic Diaglott* and the *Concordant Version*. Is it not reasonable to assume that Elijah will be this "chief messenger," in view of the predictions of Malachi 3:1 and 4:5-6?

Jesus said that Elijah would "first come and restore all things" (Matt. 17:11). When Elijah was on earth he had power to raise the dead. And in First Thessalonians 4 Paul says the dead (having been resurrected) will join the living to "meet the Lord in the air." Hence they would have had to have been already raised. It seems only logical that Elijah, who is Christ's messenger, will be the archangel (chief messenger) who comes first to restore the dead to life so they can join the living to meet Christ when He comes.

"Can any man today forgive sins?"

In order for a man to be able to forgive sins, he must have the same qualifications that Jesus and His apostles had: He must have the power of the Holy Spirit and be able to read the thoughts of men, to be able to render proper judgment. And we do not believe any man today has that power.

The Catholic Church today claims that its priests possess that power and are therefore able to forgive sins. And they piece together a chain of supposed evidence which to the unwary may seem conclusive. The apostles had power to forgive sins, and the Catholic Church believes Peter, who was an apostle, was their first pope, and that each succeeding pope has been an apostle of the Lamb. In this way they claim a succession of apostles, hence a succession of men with power to forgive sins.

The pope has that power and delegates it to the priesthood.

However, there are two Scriptural statements which prove the vulnerability of this claim. A text in I Corinthians 4:9 (KJV) reads: "For I think that God hath set forth us the apostles last, as it were appointed to death. . . ." The marginal reference to "us the apostles last," is, "us the last apostles." Paul was speaking of himself and associate apostles as being the "last apostles." And in Revelation 21:14, it is revealed that "the wall of the city had twelve foundations, and in them the names of the twelve apostles of the Lamb." Just twelve apostles, no more, and no less. Therefore there can be no apostles upon earth today, and no one who has the power to forgive sins.

The Holy Spirit power was withdrawn at the close of the apostolic age, and has not been renewed since.

"What did Jesus mean when He said, 'Love your enemies'? Jesus' apostle said plainly, 'Love not the world' (I John 2:15)."

In the time of Christ, enemies were usually hated, and that hatred was considered to be in harmony with the Jewish standard of religion. The ancient world was ruptured by many deep and often violent hatreds. When Jesus came saying, "Love your enemies," He was making an unequivocal and startling demand. It cut sharply across the Jewish ethics and morals.

Jesus was stating a law superior to the law of Moses. He said, "Ye have heard that it hath been said, Thou shalt love thy neighbour, and hate thine enemy." The Old Testament does not actually command hatred of enemies. Jesus said that they had *heard it said*, Thou shalt hate thy enemies. "Neighbour" in the Old Testament was usually thought of in the sense of "fellow Israelite," and "hate" often meant no more than to "love less" or "not to love." There are verses in the Old Testament which indicate a larger or lesser measure of compassion to various peoples. Israel was definitely commanded not to go in with their wicked and pagan neighbor-nations that so often caused Israel to sin. Certainly they were justified in loving them less.

In the New Testament there are three words translated "love." One indicates physical romantic love; another, the love that binds a family and friends; and third—the one used in Matthew 5:43-44—that love which expresses persistence in goodwill in Christ. We are not to love everyone with a natural and spontaneous affection; rather, Christ tells us to act in goodwill from God toward all men.

This command was especially meaningful to the

Jews of Jesus' day who sought to justify their hatred of Roman authority by their interpretation of the law of Moses. They made no attempt to control their bitter, hateful feelings, and this, said Jesus, was wrong. They were jealous, revengeful, hating Jesus—to the point of wanting to kill Him.

While Jesus told them the plain facts, He did not harbor any feelings of revenge. He did not wish them harm or seek to injure them. He did not stir up His apostles and disciples with feelings of hatred or ill will. When Peter cut off the ear of the high priest's servant, Jesus rebuked Peter and restored the ear (Matt. 26:51; Mark 14:47). When the disciples James and John asked Jesus to command fire to consume the Samaritans who would not receive them, again Jesus rebuked their impetuous spirit. Jesus never justified any ill feelings.

This does not say that Jesus condoned evil. He condemned it, and He separated Himself from it; but had He had ill feelings or feelings of revenge toward those who opposed Him, He would only have been adding to their evil a stain upon His own character. Thus, as our Perfect Example, He showed how we may show a spirit of goodwill and benevolence even toward our enemies.

Paul tells how we should love our enemies in his letter to the Roman Church: "Never pay back evil for evil to anyone; aim to be above reproach in the eyes of all; be at peace with all men, if possible, so far as that depends on you. Never revenge yourselves, beloved, but let the Wrath of God have its way; for it is written, Vengeance is mine, I will exact a requital—the Lord has said it.

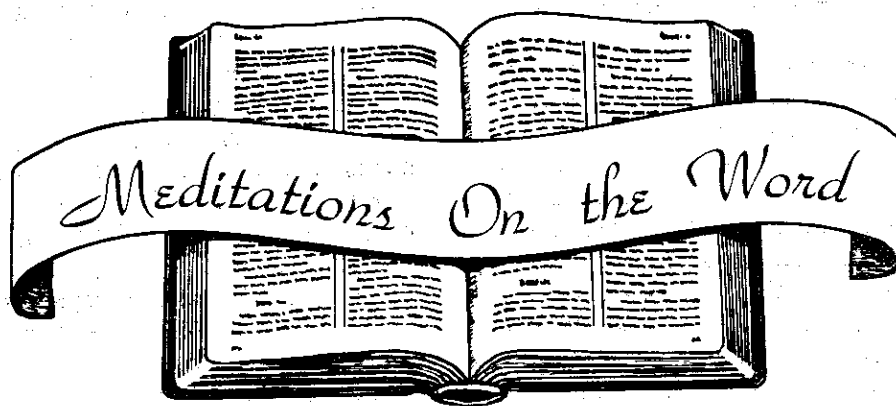
"No, if your enemy is hungry, feed him, if he is thirsty, give him drink; for in this way you will make him feel a burning sense of shame. Never let evil get the better of you; get the better of evil by doing good" (Rom. 12:17-21, Moffatt Bible).●●

Should One Christian Tell Another?

(Continued from page 11)

creates a conflict. This conflict is inevitable during the six-thousand years of God's testing and selecting. During the Millennial reign of Christ it will be different. Men then will have no choice. They will be told what to do, and if they wish to live, they will have to comply.

Until that time, we as striving Christians should listen to our fellow Christian when he tells us where we can improve, according to the law of God, and take earnest heed to his advice. It is the only way to that better life that lies ahead. ●●



"If ye have faith as a grain of mustard seed, ye shall say to this mountain, Remove hence to yonder place; and it shall remove; and nothing shall be impossible unto you" —(Matt. 17:20).

WITHOUT question, men and women who choose to follow the Master undertake a vocation that demands more of their mental powers than any earthly enterprise. The way is strait, it is narrow; and its travelers are instilled with a sense of urgency. But, as if to counterbalance the difficulty, Jesus and all the sacred writers furnish help and instruction in such an inspiring manner that just to understand their beautiful and stirring utterances impels one to quicken his pace forward. Our text is truly one of these masterful expressions—a few words, but a volume of meaning.

We do not for a moment concede that Jesus had any reference here to the removal of literal mountains. Jesus understood human nature and therefore applied this term of "mountains" to man's weaknesses such as unbelief, despair, frustration, ignorance, lust, covetousness, and, in fact, every besetment of the carnal mind. They are mountains in the sense that they plague our lives; they stand in our way and hinder our spiritual growth. Mountains they are, formidable and defiant, but conquerable.

Now, it may seem to us that there are mountains which cannot be removed. Such obstacles as a physical handicap, the grief sustained in the loss of a loved one, or a haunted memory because of past sins, are real. There is no denying their existence. But in reality they are not mountains. It is our improper attitude toward them that hinders our progress and is the mountain.

Consider, as a case in point, a physical handicap. Today we cannot be healed miraculously, as, for instance, the man at the Gate Beautiful, or the man born blind. But such handicaps are not really the mountains, for we can learn to live with them.

We can learn to bear our handicaps in a right spirit. Instead of chafing about that which cannot be helped, let him who has some such trial attack the mountain of self-pity or indolence and use whatever senses or faculties he has to the best advantage, and, without question, he will be able to live usefully and radiantly.

Worthy of mention in connection with physical handicaps is the unsurpassed example of Miss Helen Keller. Deaf and blind since the age of 19 months, she found life an "exciting business." Her enviable record of accomplishments in behalf of others puts to shame countless numbers of humanity who possess all their faculties. Many men and women with lesser afflictions can take courage and surmount their difficulties.

In our daily duties it is not uncommon to be faced with tasks which we have no desire whatsoever to perform. We may dislike them, and dread the thought of doing them, yet, as so often is the case, when we set our mind to get the task done, and go at it with a will, the dislike and dread disappear and the work soon gets done. Our mental reaction toward a difficulty determines whether we shall succeed in mastering the problem we face, or fail.

In many respects the problems of our spiritual life may be treated in this manner. By direct attack a man of strong will and faith can conquer the mountains that confront him. Ignorance can be dispelled by diligent study; frustration or disappointment can be removed by a better understanding of God's will and a realization that all things work together for good to them that love God (Rom. 8:28). The principal necessity is faith, and with faith these things are possible.

The apostle Paul enumerated some of the difficulties which he encountered constantly (II Cor. 11: 23-33). To many of us any one of these hardships would prove to be a mountain, but Paul did not allow these things to hinder him in the good work which he was doing. Whether it was persecution, peril among false brethren, or the daily care of all the churches, he endured hardship as a good soldier of Jesus Christ. Though he knew that everywhere he went bonds and imprisonment awaited him, he was fearless.

"Who shall separate us from the love of Christ?" Paul asked, and after naming over such mountains as tribulation, distress, persecution, famine, nakedness, peril, sword, he said, "In all these things we are more than conquerors" (Rom. 8:35-37). In the two following verses he relates his resolution or persuasion that nothing would separate him from the love of Christ. In other words, no mountain would stand between him and serving God. Even the "thorn in the flesh"—he prayed thrice for its removal. But after receiving God's answer: "My grace is sufficient for thee," he learned to endure.

The reason for Paul's triumph was in his deep faith and conviction. "I *know* whom I have believed," he wrote to Timothy, "and am persuaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed unto him against that day" (II Tim. 1:12).

The Old Testament also records noteworthy examples of faith and the removal of "mountains." All Israel feared Goliath and thought it impossible to conquer him, but David slew him. In Babylon no one would dare to disobey the king's decree, but Daniel and his three companions, in time of crises, chose to serve God, refusing to do any homage to heathen gods. Not only were they delivered but were also promoted. Nehemiah's building the wall of Jerusalem is an unusual demonstration of removal of a mountain. The Jews needed a wall, they wanted a wall, but feared to go ahead. Nehemiah's faith and determination brought results.

The greatest need is for faith in these last days, for it is only by faith that our mountains of sin are overcome. Especially was that faith strong in our founder, Rev. L. T. Nichols, who challenged the mountains of religious ignorance, superstition, and theological tradition. Conquering these, he disclosed the truth of God's Word, in both precept and example, to his people that they might gain faith and remove their mountains of sin.

Faith is the most essential element in the Christian's life and we should at all times strive to increase it. Though to us it may appear small as a grain of mustard seed, yet if we direct it properly, if we determine to remove our mountains of sin, whatever they may be, we shall succeed surely. ●●

February, 1976

Our Readers Write...

Good Glue

The Word of truth is the glue that holds our lives together. I wish I had more opportunity to study with others, but so many people go after the things of this world and forget God. There are so many professing Christians who live as they please through the week and on Sunday become "Christians." We can't be this way if we want God to love us.

Mt. Enterprise, Texas

C. B.

It Makes Sense

I have been subscribing to the *Megiddo Message* for a year. I have also obtained the Megiddo Mission Church booklets explaining various theological doctrines.

You folks make the most sense to me—a man of 53 who has explored various theologies for all my life.

I changed my address—please be sure my new address is on your mailing list, for I do not want to miss any future issues.

West Nyack, New York

D. J.

"Occupy"

I read the other day, "Occupy till I come." The word "occupy" hit me so hard I just had to look up the full meaning of it in my dictionary. Here it is: "take possession of, hold, keep, as for use; fill, cover, employ."

If we take possession of anything, it is ours; we own it. Our religion is something we should own; it is not something we can put down and forget about until next Sunday. It is an everyday thing if we own it. And it should own us. We should live it, eat it, sleep it, for it is our life.

"Hold" means to "grasp, to keep in hand, clutch, retain, possess, connect, entertain, adhere, stand good." To hold one's hand means love and security. A child when it is frightened will come and hold your hand if it wants to show its love for you. If the child is afraid of getting lost, it will hold your hand. That is what we must do with God. To occupy is to be all wrapped up in God, to love Him, to trust Him, to "hold His hand," figuratively speaking, doing only the things that please Him.

Nottinghamshire, England

H. L.

He Is Coming!

We know the Lord is coming back to earth very soon, and are we redeeming the time as we should, or are we letting our thoughts wander in by and forbidden paths? How I long to bridle the tongue, and not offend in word.

We are being greatly blessed to be living during these closing days. How thankful we should be that God has caused us to live at this time.

Milton, Iowa

E. T.



Cleansing . . .

*Purge me, O God,
With Thy refining fires!
Nor cease Thy purging flame
Till I am free from shame.*

*Sweep my soul clean
By cleansing winds of trial!
Nor let me fret at storm and stress
Whose purpose is to bless!*

*Give me a task
That I must do for Thee.
Then let me live at length
In Thy eternal realm,
Where I shall find sweet rest
And everlasting strength!*

Selected