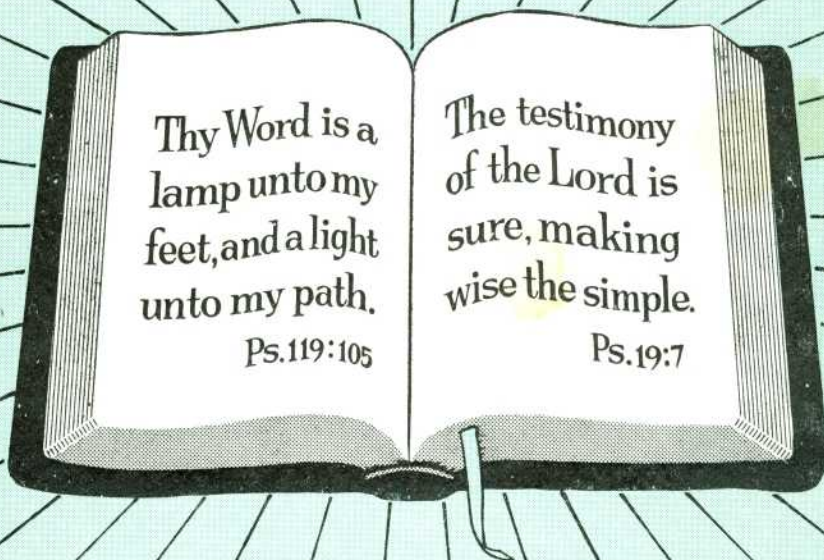


# Megiddo Message

DEVOTED TO THE CAUSE OF CHRIST



**Navigating the Narrows**

**The Sabbath**

**Understanding the Bible**

**"Never Stop Until You Reach the Top"**



# Megiddo Message

Vol. 59, No. 3

March, 1972

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

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

The MEGIDDO MESSAGE will

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- Answer perplexing religious questions
- Give you courage for these uncertain times
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Published monthly by the  
MEGIDDO 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 Church. Please notify promptly of any change of address. Foreign subscribers, please make all payments by international money order, available at most banks and post offices.

Second Class Postage paid at Rochester, New York.

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## Editorially Speaking...

### The Day Is Near!

THESE ARE not ordinary times. As one distinguished educator wrote recently, "vast changes are rapidly sweeping the world as swirling ocean currents sweep the sea. These changes are economic, educational, social, moral and religious. We are surrounded, as never before, by tension, lawlessness, and drug-addicted exhortations to infidelity and rebellion. Social and moral standards, once regarded as firm as the everlasting hills, yield and buckle under the overwhelming impact of relentless change.

"Surely it is written with fiery emphasis that this world has come to fateful times, when stupendous forces have been let loose to shake the world to its very foundation."

These words are true and sobering. We are racing toward the final climax, and destructive forces are gathering momentum. World events change so rapidly that one hesitates to comment on them, for he will be out of date in just a few days.

Why such an avalanche of social turmoil, crime, murders, riots, immorality and insecurity? God's prophets foresaw that such would be. For "evil men and seducers shall wax worse and worse, deceiving, and being deceived. . . . This know also, that in the last days perilous times shall come. For men shall be lovers of their own selves, covetous, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, without natural affection, trucebreakers, false accusers, incontinent, fierce, despisers of those that are good, traitors, heady, high-minded, lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God" (II Tim. 3:13, 1-4).

We are seeing increasing confusion, lawlessness and seeming futility, for man has been sowing to the wind and must necessarily reap the whirlwind. But we need not despair. We can look up and rejoice, not in prevailing conditions, but in the knowledge that all this only portends the end of this age. The day is hastening when Jesus will come as earth's mighty Deliverer.

In the midst of the hurricane of forgetfulness of God, His law and His truth, we need more than ever before to fix Him in our minds, to have His law the guiding and controlling agent in our lives through every moment of every day. In the midst of turmoil, we can have peace, peace which passeth understanding, in the certainty that "the day of the Lord *will* come." Our faces should radiate optimism, assurance, and joy, and we should face every tomorrow with fresh courage and eagerness.

These are days when each of us should be living triumphantly. The world at its worst needs us at our best. Our hearts, our lives, our homes should all be centers of faith and purpose, where every day shows Christian progress and every hour is filled with honest endeavor. For these are not ordinary times. "The great day of the Lord is near, it is near, and hasteth greatly"! (Zeph. 1:14). ●●

# Navigating the Narrows

## PRAYER

Our loving Father, thou mighty Being who makest the seven stars and Orion, Thou who hast the power to turn for us the shadow of death into the morning: Thou art He who judgest the thoughts and intents of the heart to give to every man according to the fruit of his doings.

We thank Thee that the eyes of our understanding have been enlightened to see the things which the wise and prudent of this world have hidden, the things which have a future, the knowledge which can act as a key to an endless life. Grant that we may always be willing to use that key though its use may usher us into chambers of self-condemnation, into chambers of horrors where our own shortcomings will be mirrored before us in all their hideousness, into areas of such restricted activity that we can neither think, speak nor act as the natural mind dictates, into passages so narrow and restricted that to squeeze through them we shall be obliged to surrender the last vestige of pride, self-esteem, party spirit, and seeking honor one of another.

But may we never forget that if we willingly submit to all these restrictions that key will ultimately open a door into a broad place, into the glorious Kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, into the delights of immortal life.

Grant us the wisdom to stay within the strait, narrow way, knowing it is the only way that leads to life. May we shun consistently the broad way in which the masses are traveling—easy though it be—aware that it will end in eternal oblivion.

May every moment of our lives be directed from above, every activity of each day controlled by the burning questions: Is it right, is it to Thy glory, will it be a worthy example for others to follow, will doing it bring me one step nearer my goal—eternal life?

Forgive us for the sins we have turned from and forsaken, and may we never grow weary in well-doing but continue faithful to the end, that a full reward may be ours in Thy everlasting Kingdom, for which we pray. Amen.

## DISCOURSE

IN THE southern part of Russia is an inland body of water called the Sea of Azov. About a hundred miles from shore to shore, it lends itself to comfortable and safe navigating. If you were sailing a vessel and should want to enter larger waters, you would have to head your boat through a narrow strait of water called the Strait of Kerch and out again into the broader Black Sea. Should you want wider waters still, your craft would have to move through another neck of water called the Bosphorus, and out into the long and interesting Mediterranean. If your longing should be for really spacious stretches of water and you should wish to sail the broad Atlantic, again you would face the necessity of navigating the narrows, this time the Strait of Gibraltar. And should you want the most endless reaches of ocean to sail, to reach the mighty Pacific, you would have to maneuver the slow and painstaking Panama Canal, or navigate among the reefs and islands of Cape Horn.

While Christ did not use a nautical picture when He spoke of the strait gate and the narrow way that leads to life, I believe He did want us to realize that no larger life is reached except through the narrows of discipline; no great freedom is reached except through the painful course of decision; no broad stretches of usefulness will unfold except through self-denial and duty. To drift along, whether blithely in naive optimism or grimly in abject despair, will open no doors to life. You can keep sailing along on the Sea of Azov, but if you want to move in on the intriguing Mediterranean, or the broad Atlantic, or the almost endless freedom of the Pacific, you simply must head into the narrows.

### The Narrows of Restricted Beliefs

When God's saving truth found us, we were in darkness. We were held in an enclosure of our own making, in a prison house of darkness. At that time we were "without Christ, being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers from

the covenants of promise, having no hope, and without God in the world" (Eph. 2:12). We were living our lives in any way that appealed to us, giving no serious thought to whether our ways were right or wrong, trusting blindly in the hope that all would be well in the end whatever our course through life. We were plagued with an attitude of smallness: small interests, small ideals, small goals. Sailing in this small sphere was fairly easy. There were no great sacrifices to make, no harsh decisions to arrive at, no rough storms to encounter, no strong currents to battle. Nevertheless we were hemmed in by a continuous shoreline. We had no place to go.

The fact that we have given ourselves to investigate God's Word is an evidence of a longing to sail broader seas. We were not content with the old idea of a God who began working only about six thousand years ago, and who was so short of material for His heavenly Kingdom that He was obliged to save all of the human family, irrespective of character. Then the belief that God would condemn all mankind for the sin of our greatest, greatest grandfather, Adam, held us in a straitjacket too confining to be tolerated or worn with comfort. And the alternative of a Christ dying for us on the cross to undo the harm that Adam had done, seemed an idea too devoid of either depth or breadth—or any sense of justice—to satisfy the enquiring mind. But to get into a larger body of water of enlightened understanding, we must navigate the narrows. We have to change our way of thinking on all our basic beliefs. We have to discard many of the beliefs that we formerly held. We have to search the Scriptures; we have to learn to compare spiritual things with spiritual that we may learn the mind of God. Said Jesus: "Ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free" (John 8:32). When we have learned the truth, we have taken one step toward freedom of action.

To navigate these narrows we must agree with the statement of Jesus that the way to life is narrow and difficult to travel, and that only a small minority will choose that way. If community spirited, the thought of being denied the privilege of going with the masses will not appeal to us. Popularity often is a deciding factor with people. Some would feel more secure on the popular side even though they were not at all certain that it held any future for them. Hence navigating this narrow may prove a problem.

Freedom of thought is a freedom that is held so dear that over the ages millions of lives have been given to secure or retain it. A noted Frenchman once said: "I wholly disagree with what you

say, but I will defend to the death of me your right to say it." But navigating the narrows of restricted belief controls our thinking. "The thought of foolishness is sin," says Prov. 24:9. And God, speaking through Isaiah, declares: "For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, saith the Lord. For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts" (Isa. 55: 8-9). Therefore we cannot believe as we please, but must believe according to God's Word, "speak as the oracles of God" (I Pet. 4:11).

The charity or love which endures when human perversions have been swept away like dust "rejoices in the truth," and no lie can be of the truth. The formula is: "casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ" (II Cor. 10:5). God wants us to believe what He has told us to believe. The natural mind wants to believe what it chooses to believe, and discard what it doesn't care to believe; but God gives us no such freedom of choice. The narrows restricts our belief to what can be proven: "Prove all things; hold fast that which is good." "Let God be true, but every man a liar" (I Thess. 5:21; Rom. 3:4). The navigating of these narrows restricts our beliefs to what the God of heaven has said.

When we have passed through the first narrows, our ship of life is sailing on a much broader expanse of water. We are out into the broad stretches of the interesting Mediterranean, but this does not free us from problems. We have found the truth that sets us free from the restricted shoreline of superstition and darkness, but we have less secure sailing. Much of the time the sea is choppy, and every now and again a Euroclydon storm rages to hazard our journey. Our first voyage through the straits has brought us into a much larger body of water, also greater responsibilities.

Knowledge always brings responsibility. Jesus said: "If I had not come and spoken unto them, they had not had sin: but now they have no cloke for their sin" (John 15:22). Doing must accompany knowing; faith without works is dead. Said Jesus again: "If ye know these things, happy are ye if ye do them" (John 13:17). But doing is not easy. It is contrary to nature. The flesh lusts against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh, resulting in tempests and conflicts in the mind.

## The Narrows of Duty

There are four narrows which every man must navigate if he is to live free and full and merit a full reward in God's kingdom. The second of these is duty. It would be pleasant if we did not need to face these straits. If one could do just as he pleases, satisfying his every whim and caprice, and still live a successful Christian life, that would be comforting indeed. But such is impossible. The law of God says: "Thou shalt," and "thou shalt not." It may be painful for the moment to do what duty tells one to do, but once you have navigated through these narrows you sail out upon waters that are deep and broad and peaceful. Had you refused you would have remained within the petty circle of selfishness and guilt and remorse, an enemy rather than a friend of God.

Long years ago a great king, David of Israel, tried to escape these narrows. His conscience kept tormenting him "because of his transgression" until it seemed that day and night the hand of God weighed heavily upon him. He had sidestepped duty, and his transgression squeezed all the joy and peace out of his nights and days. Such is the inner biography of every man who tries to find happiness without going through the passageway of duty. In the familiar hymn, "Faith of Our Fathers," this same truth appears in the refrain: "Our fathers, chained in prisons dark, Were still in heart and conscience free." They were sailing the broad expanse of the outer Pacific because they had navigated boldly through the narrows of duty.

It usually is easier to sidestep our duty than to step manfully up and do our duty in whatever way it may come to us. Many times our duty is unpleasant; to fulfill it takes us through a narrow channel.

It is our duty to obey God rather than man. The things man would give us license to do would give us freedom of action. We could do whatever is right in our own eyes. But to obey God we must forego all this. The command is: "Ye shall not do after all the things that we do here this day, every man whatsoever is right in his own eyes" (Deut. 12:8).

It is our duty to judge people by their accomplishments in the divine life, to always give them their just deserts, whether good or ill. But it is difficult for us to be strictly honest and fair, and as Jesus said, know them by their fruits. Naturally we would favor the person we take a liking to, while we would have disfavor for the person we do not like. But such discrimination is denied us when navigating the narrow channel that opens

out into the broad expanses of a wholly consecrated life.

The command is: "If thou see the ass of him that hateth thee lying under his burden, and wouldest forbear to help him, thou shalt surely help with him" (Ex. 23:5). It would be simple and easy to come to the rescue of our bosom friend when he needed help; but to help a person we do not care for, one whose tastes are different from ours, one whose ways do not appeal to us, is something more difficult. But we should remember that in God's sight that person might have a cleaner record than we ourselves. "For the Lord seeth not as man seeth; for man looketh on the outward appearance, but the Lord looketh on the heart" (I Sam. 16:7). It is our duty to look through God's eyes, but the fulfilling of that duty is always difficult.

It is our duty to obey the command: "Remember them which have the rule over you, who have spoken unto you the word of God: whose faith follow, considering the end of their conversation" (Heb. 13:7). To admit that we need guidance is damaging to our ego; it hurts our pride, hence is a narrows we do not care to navigate. But it is the prelude to true greatness, to real breadth and depth in the Christian life. Before honor comes humility. It takes humility to say as did the Ethiopian eunuch, in answer to Philip's query: "Understandest thou what thou readest?" "How can I, except some man should guide me?" (Acts 8:30-31); or with the prophet Jeremiah: "O Lord, I know that the way of man is not in himself: it is not in man that walketh to direct his steps" (Jer. 10:23).

Oftentimes duty demands that we speak when we would rather keep silent, and keep silent when we are fairly bursting to talk. The command to Isaiah was: "Cry aloud, spare not, lift up thy voice like a trumpet, and show my people their transgression, and the house of Jacob their sins" (58:1). This is not an easy thing to do; especially when it involves someone that is near and dear to us. We each must be a brother's keeper; we each must be a watchman, and the watchman's duty is to speak out when he sees danger, to warn the wicked one from the Lord. The brother or sister in transgression will die the second death for his or her iniquity, but their blood will be required at the hand of the watchman who failed to do his duty. Under the Mosaic arrangement the instructions were: "Thou shalt not hate thy brother in thine heart: thou shalt in any wise rebuke thy neighbour, and not suffer sin upon him" (Lev. 19:17).

It is our duty to love our brother, and this love may be shown in any one of a number of different ways. The foregoing definition of love for the brother or neighbor is one of these, but only one, and it is a duty that we cannot leave to another. There are also other forms of love: Interest in another's welfare; willingness to share with our brother; longsuffering; willingness to forgive a wrong; little acts of kindness as well as larger ones; Christian consideration. Paul sums it up well in Eph. 4:31-32: "Let all bitterness, and wrath, and anger, and clamour, and evil speaking, be put away from you, with all malice: and be ye kind one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you."

Fulfilling our duty demands that we come out from the world and be a separate and peculiar people, that we let "Christian wisdom rule [our] behavior to the outside world." We cannot conform to the world in speech, deportment, or dress. We must be wholly different from them, and let our light so shine before men that they may see our good works and glorify our Father which is in heaven. Although living in the midst of a wicked and perverse nation our standard of righteousness cannot be dictated by its concepts of right and wrong. We cannot—we must not—bow to conformity in any way.

It is our duty to go the second mile, to do more than actual duty would demand. If we have done someone a wrong let us be the first to go to that brother and admit that wrong, and not wait for the other person to call our attention to it. There is no better way to get ourselves right with God, but let us not try to deceive ourselves into thinking it will be easy to navigate our ship around this craggy rock in our narrows. It takes a lot of godly humility, and an earnest desire to do right, to admit that we are wrong.

It is our duty to help lift another's cross. None of us liveth unto himself. We each have a daily cross to bear; we each need help, and we each must be ready to help someone else. In place of saying the other person has no cross and trying to minimize his problems let us try to have a sympathetic understanding of his problems. Among our duties none is more restricting than the Golden Rule. To fully obey this rule demands that we put ourselves in our brother's place, that we evaluate our own actions toward him with the same critical eye as we evaluate his actions toward us. It requires that we treat him the same way we ourselves would want to be treated. It is our duty to love as we have been loved.

## The Narrows of Decision

The third narrows is decision. To make a decision is often a painful thing. Even in trifles we procrastinate, hoping that circumstances may spare us a decision. The more sensitive we are to making blunders the more we may recoil from making a decision between two alternatives, neither one of which is to our liking, and neither one of which looks wholly right. But decide we must; to drift is certain to be harmful. To the man of the world who doesn't care to get down to the finer details of right living, the decision may be between the crowd and applause on the one hand, and the right and loneliness on the other. With the student it may be: Shall I cheat in my examinations and pass, or shall I take a failing grade? For the man in business, Shall I charge all I can get for my merchandise and services, or shall I be content to live and let live? As an office seeker, shall I declare my convictions and lose the election, or shall I promise what the people want and win?

With one who truly loves life there are numerous decisions to be made, some great, some small. Before our inception into the Christian way of life there is a vital decision to be made. Jesus Himself stressed the need for carefulness in making this decision. It is to first sit down and count the cost before commencing to build the Christian life. We read: "For which of you, intending to build a tower, sitteth not down first, and counteth the cost, whether he have sufficient to finish it? Lest haply, after he hath laid the foundation, and is not able to finish it, all that behold it begin to mock him, saying, This man began to build, and was not able to finish... so likewise, whosoever he be of you that forsaketh not all that he hath, he cannot be my disciple" (Luke 14:28-30, 33).

That is a decision of the first importance; life and death hang in the balance and there is grave danger that that decision, once made, will not stick. The price of being Christ's disciple is that we forsake everything of the world, everything of the flesh, everything of self. Our first flush of interest and zeal for the boon of eternal life may cause us to approach indicated trials from an entirely different angle than we will view them as we actually meet them, and after the novelty of our Christian experiment wears off. It was in the aftermath of exploring this possibility that Jesus said: "But he that shall endure unto the end, the same shall be saved" (Matt. 24:13).

One of the first decisions that confronts us as we choose the narrow way is our relationship with those who are not interested in the same things

*(Continued on page 20)*

# Timely Topics

ONE OF man's seemingly natural tendencies has been the desire to explore the unknown, to reach out to and to search out that which yet remains mysterious. He has searched to the "ends of the earth," probed into the depths of the ocean, and then has turned to the exploration of the vast and infinite reaches of space. Man on the moon was quite an accomplishment in men's eyes, and now it is on to Mars.

Recently, on the basis of new photographs taken by the United States' Mariner 9 spacecraft, scientists have been changing some of their long-held opinions about this planet nearest to our own in the solar system. As Mariner 9 orbited Mars in its latest explorative cycle, pictures radioed back to earth revealed that the planet is more "alive" than it was formerly thought to be.

**Man and Mars** As recently as 1969, scientists believed Mars to be dead geologically. But the latest discovery shows Mars as having a varying surface with canyons, craters, elevations, evidences of erosion, and canals which may have been caused by "Mars-quakes." Now the theory is that instead of being an ancient, dead body, Mars is active—ancient in years but geologically young. And it remains to be seen what the planned space probes of the future will reveal about this fourth planet from the sun.

But, though man makes many advances in space exploration and elsewhere, he cannot always depend on his own puny faculties. Theories are ever-changing, and old ideas and beliefs are often being discarded for new. Through the centuries, science has come a long way in acknowledging the vastness of the heavens, but while a spacecraft to Mars or men on the moon to humans seems rather unique, yet it is nothing compared to the exploration of the endless, boundless, infinite reaches of space as enjoyed by the angels of God.

As aspiring Christians, this should be our main concern: to prepare ourselves now so that someday we will be worthy to attain to that blessed estate of being made "equal unto the angels," never to die any more. We, too, find ourselves filled with awe at the beautiful and immense

reaches of the heavens, and would desire to know more about the billions of worlds on high. What order controls the whole of it! Truly, "the heavens declare the glory of God; and the firmament sheweth his handiwork" (Ps. 19:1). God's wisdom is so much greater than the limited knowledge and research of man, that the two cannot begin to be compared.

"O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! how unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways past finding out!" (Rom. 11:33). Yes, mere mortal man could never hope to attain this immeasurable wisdom of the Almighty God. It is only those deserving eternal life, worthy of gaining the grand prize of immortality who will enjoy the knowledge gained by true exploration of the heavens.

Those of us who would long to be recipients of the promise found in Isaiah 40:31, "they shall mount up with wings as eagles," should be most content now with the wonderful knowledge of God's plan as recorded in the Bible, counting this as the best knowledge we have been able to obtain in this mortal life, leaving the grander laws to be learned in the world to come. ●●

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## *Announcement*

The New Year is coming!

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

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

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

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

# THE SABBATH

WHEN WAS IT GIVEN?  
TO WHOM WAS IT GIVEN?  
WHY WAS IT GIVEN?  
WAS IT TO LAST FOREVER?  
IF NOT, WHEN WAS IT TO CEASE?  
WHAT LAW ARE WE NOW UNDER?

## The Sabbath and Paul

**T**HROUGHOUT HIS Epistles the apostle Paul makes strong, clear, positive statements that the outworn, Mosaic law, including the Ten Commandment law, is abolished in Christ.

In Colossians 2, Paul states plainly that the Sabbath was taken out of the way by Jesus' nailing it to His cross, and therefore no one has a right to judge us for its non-observance. "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; and having spoiled principalities and powers, he made a shew of them openly, triumphing over them in it.

"Let no man therefore judge you in meat, or in drink, or in respect of a holyday, or of the new moon, or of the sabbath days; which are a shadow of things to come; but the body is of Christ" (Col. 2:14—17).

Colossians 2:16 may be regarded as a key to this new concept of the law of Moses, as Paul is presenting it. "Therefore let no one pass judgment on you in questions of food or drink or with regard to a festival or a new moon or a sabbath. These are only a shadow of what is to come [cf. Heb. 8:5]; but their substance belongs to Christ." This translator clearly shows Paul's meaning. Together with all the other festival and food laws of the old law, the Jewish Sabbath was also fulfilled in Christ. A contemporary scholar states it well: "It is a bold picture: the sabbath and the other festivals of Israelite and Jewish origin were like silhouettes cast by that which was to come: now, however, the reality has come, the 'substance' which cast these shadows. For this reason no one now looks any more at the silhouettes, for that is now present of

which they were but the shadowy image. . . . It might well indeed stand as a picture of the fact that the law was altogether fulfilled in Christ; not only the ceremonial laws, but the whole law of Moses was, in essence, completely fulfilled in Christ in this way."\*

The old law with its commandments and ordinances and new moons and sabbaths was "nailed to the cross"; it was "that which was written and engraven in stone" and it was "done away," "abolished." The old law was gone, and the Sabbath went with it.

However, seventh-day keepers object. They say that the term "sabbath days" used by Paul in Col. 2:16 has reference to the feast-days and holy days of the law, monthly and yearly. But by careful reading of the text we can see that Paul includes all the holy days of the Jews in the "meats" and "drinks," "holy days" and "new moons"; hence, the term "sabbath days" must refer to the weekly sabbaths.

But there is further objection: the term "sabbath-days" in Col. 2:16 is plural, therefore it cannot refer to the weekly rest-day. However, this reasoning is weak. Read Ex. 31:13: "My sabbaths ye shall keep"; or Lev. 19:3, 30: "Keep my sabbaths"; or Ezek. 20:12: "I gave them my sabbaths." Or Matthew 12:10: "Is it lawful to heal on the sabbath days?" or Luke 4:31: Jesus "taught them on the sabbath days."

Colossians 2:16 says the same thing exactly: "Let no man therefore judge you . . . in respect . . . of the sabbath days." And these are the sabbaths which Paul says Jesus "nailed to the cross."

Notice also another point: The word translated "sabbath-days" in Col. 2:16 is identical with the word used elsewhere for the weekly sabbath. "In

\* Willy Rordorf, *Sunday*, p. 101.



the end of the Sabbath [*sabbaton*]" (Matt. 28:1). "On the Sabbath day [*sabbaton*]" (Acts 13:14; Luke 4:16). And "Let no man therefore judge you . . . in respect of the sabbath-days [*sabbaton*]" (Col. 2:16). The word "sabbath" is found in the New Testament sixty times. In fifty-nine of these it obviously refers to the weekly sabbath—why should the sixtieth time be different?

In Galatians 4 Paul describes obedience to the law that demands the observance of "days, and months, and times, and years" as slavery, in contrast with the freedom of the new covenant. "Even so we, when we were children, were in bondage under the elements of the world: but when the fullness of the time was come, God sent forth his Son, . . . to redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons. . . . But now, after that ye have known God, or rather are known of God, how turn ye again to the weak and beggarly elements, whereunto ye desire again to be in bondage? Ye observe days, and months, and times, and years. I am afraid of you, lest I have bestowed upon you labour in vain" (Gal. 4:3-5, 9-11).

We quote from a modern commentator: "It is clear that in this text the Apostle was making a conscious attempt to depreciate in the eyes of Gentile Christians the value of the loyal obligations of Judaism: he was intending to show Gentile Christians their own senselessness in being attracted by the Jewish law. His object was to warn the Galatians by reference to their own past of the perils of Judaizing. He made this point by boldly claiming that the adoption of Jewish customs did not constitute progress for Gentile Christians, but was tantamount to a relapse into pagan ways. In other words, if Gentile Christians began to observe days and festivals in the Jewish fashion, then in the final analysis, Paul says, they fell a prey to the same delusion as did the pagans who in superstitious awe submitted to elemental spirits and demons."<sup>†</sup>

#### "Ye Are Not Under the Law"

Paul spoke definitely of the relation of his Christian brethren to the old law: "But if ye be led of the Spirit, ye are not under the law" (Gal. 5:18). "For brethren, ye have been called unto liberty; only use not liberty for an occasion to the flesh, but by love serve one another. For all the law is fulfilled in one word, even in this; Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. . . . This I say then, Walk in the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfill the lust of the flesh. For . . .

*ye are not under the law*" (Gal. 5:13-18). Their obligation was to "walk in the Spirit," to obey the "law of Christ," not the law of Moses.

In Romans 14:4-6 Paul states his own position and gives advice: "Who art thou that judgest another man's servant? to his own master he standeth or falleth. Yea, he shall be holden up: for God is able to make him stand. One man esteemeth one day above another; another esteemeth every day alike. Let every man be fully persuaded in his own mind. He that regardeth the day, regardeth it unto the Lord; and he that regardeth not the day, to the Lord he doth not regard it." To Paul no one day stood above another—not even the seventh.

#### Preaching on the Sabbath

If Paul understood that Jewish law did not apply to Christians, why, then, did he himself attend the synagogues on the Sabbath?

In I Corinthians 9 Paul speaks of his apparent obeisance to the law as a part of his missionary tactics: "Unto the Jews I became as a Jew, that I might gain the Jews; to them that are under the law, as under the law" (I Cor. 9:20—this verse shows that Christians were *not* under the law), or as translated in the Twentieth Century New Testament, "though I was not myself subject to the Law." This fact accounts for his presence at the synagogue on the Sabbath days of the Jews: "that I might gain the Jews" and "them that are under the law." By preaching in the synagogue on the Sabbath, Paul did not mean that he himself was keeping the old Mosaic Sabbath; but when the people were gathered together, as on the Sabbath, Paul could more easily reach them with the message of Christ. Paul was simply taking advantage of the situation. Likewise, Jesus' visits to the synagogue on the Sabbath do not necessarily mean He was a zealous observer of the Jewish law or that He was strict about the Sabbath commandment. "It stands to reason that Jesus used the opportunity to deliver his message in the synagogues where people were assembled on the Sabbath. On every occasion preaching was the purpose of his visit to the synagogue. The fact that Jesus taught in the synagogue sheds no light on his attitude toward the sabbath itself."<sup>‡</sup>

(To Be Continued)

*The man who is good at making excuses is good at little else.*

*The man who says it cannot be done is likely to be interrupted by somebody doing it.*

<sup>\*</sup> *Ibid.* pp. 132, 133.

<sup>†</sup> *Ibid.* pp. 67, 68.



## Johnny's Lost Pencil



I don't want you in this shop! Both of you get out of here! Go home and stay there!" It was evident that nine-year-old Johnny was more than mildly disturbed.

"But, I didn't take your pencil, and Sam didn't either," retorted Phil. The two four-year-olds had left their tricycles in the driveway and gone into the shop where Johnny was working.

"Yes, you *did* take my pencil! Where did it go if you didn't? I had it laying right on this bench. And it's gone!" argued Johnny.

"You can search me," offered Phil, throwing up his arms.

"Me too," said Sam, stretching high like he did when they played grown-up.

Johnny wasn't going to be fooled. "You hid it somewhere. I told you to go home and I mean it!" Johnny was angry.

The two little boys sadly mounted their tricycles and rode away. They were much disappointed. They loved to be with Johnny in the corner of the garage that the Allens used for a shop.

"What's all this?" asked Johnny's mother, appearing on the scene just as the boys rode away. "Johnny, it sounds as though you were angry. You know it isn't right to get angry."

"Yes, I know I shouldn't but —" he hesitated—"but those little scamps took my pencil, that extra nice one Uncle George sent from Florida."

"Scamps! Johnny! That's not a nice thing to call the little boys."

"Well, they are always coming around doing something they shouldn't. You know they get into your flowers, and now they are starting to steal," argued Johnny.

"But Johnny, suppose they do break down a flower. Their mother warned them never to pick any, and as far as I know they never have. They love to smell of them, and how do you know, Johnny, maybe these flowers do their little hearts more good than the enjoyment we get out of them. We have to live and let live. If they were some big, bad boys that wouldn't improve, we wouldn't allow them to come here. Maybe they didn't take your pencil. It wasn't nice of you to order them out of the yard like you did." Mrs. Allen felt bad to think Johnny would act so unkindly.

"Where would the pencil be if they hadn't taken it? I know I laid it right on the bench, and it's gone. It's the finest ever-sharp pencil I ever had. Roger's father says it's a very rare design. No one has any like it.

They saw it was pretty and took it and I don't know what they did with it."

"But they said they *didn't*. You are *too positive*, Johnny. I think you should apologize for being rude to them. I want you to get two of those nice red apples that I bought this week and take them to the boys. There they are now, sitting on their back steps, looking as though they had lost their best friend. If you are kind to them, they may return your pencil if they have it." Then going to the rose bush, she picked two lovely roses. She trimmed the dead blossoms from several of the rose bushes while she waited. Finally she called, "Johnny, are you coming?"

Johnny appeared with the apples, but still in a bad frame of mind. "Why should I have to go over there and apologize to them?" he muttered.

"Why should you apologize? Because you've done wrong. It doesn't matter what anyone else has done, our duty is to make ourselves right."

Johnny knew that his mother was right, so, without another word, he scuffed down the walk carrying the two red roses and the apples. Shortly Johnny returned, somewhat relieved, as a person always is when he makes amends for his bad con-

duct. However he did not have the pencil.

It was three evenings later and the Allen family were sitting at the supper table.

"These muffins taste especially good tonight, Mother," said Father, as an excuse for helping himself to the third one. "By the way, I don't think I thanked you for cleaning up our shop. Johnny and I seem to lack the knack of making it look as neat as you do."

"Always thought it was a talent that women naturally have, especially Mom," said Johnny dryly.

After supper was over, Father remarked, "Instead of the verses we have been memorizing, we will have some special ones tonight."

Without saying a word, Mother left the table and went to the living room. As she returned to her place at the table, Johnny looked up and saw what she had gone for. Before him lay his long-lost pencil.

"Oh, Mother! Where did it come from? Did Sam and Phil bring it back?" Johnny's face beamed with happiness to have his treasured pencil back again.

"No, Johnny. I found it in Father's tool chest. It had apparently fallen down and rolled under one of the tools," said Mother.

"I thought I had searched *everywhere*. Of course, I didn't expect it to be in the tool chest. *Thank you so very much*, Mother, for finding it," said Johnny.

"You are welcome, my son," she answered pleasantly.

"Now for our verses," said Father. "I will select an admonition from our Master's words: 'Do violence to no man, neither accuse any falsely.' We would be ashamed to have Jesus come and find us accusing someone falsely. This also reminds us of what the wise man said, 'He that answereth a matter before he heareth it, it is folly and shame unto him.'"

Johnny looked very sober as Mother added her verse, "Be not hasty in thy spirit to be angry; for anger resteth in the bosom of fools."

Now, it was Johnny's turn. He hesitated, so Father suggested, "How about saying Psalms 37: 8-9? You know them very well."

Obediently, Johnny repeated, "Cease from anger, and forsake wrath; fret not thyself in any wise to do evil. For evildoers shall be cut off: but those that wait upon the Lord, they shall inherit the earth."

Father put his hand on Johnny's shoulder. "We should always keep in mind the great reward God has offered us for controlling our temper. See how foolish you have been, Johnny. You became angry

(Continued on page 12)

## A Cake Not Turned

"Ephraim is a cake not turned"—Hos. 7:8.

WHAT KIND of cake is meant here? It is a sort of biscuit that the people in the East baked on hot stones or ashes. It had to be watched very carefully and turned at exactly the right moment or it burned on the one side and remained raw and indigestible on the other. You can imagine such a cake would not be very good to eat.

Now the Prophet says here that "Ephraim is a cake not turned." Ephraim was a name given to the kingdom of Israel, but what does he mean by saying that Israel is a cake that has not been turned? Well, he means that people were not thorough—some things they overdid, and other things they underdid or neglected altogether. They were very religious in one sense, for they worshiped God and (too often) many heathen gods besides, but they did not carry their religion into their everyday life. It did not help them to be more kind or true or just. And so they were like a cake that someone had forgotten to turn. Not only did they leave one side raw and unwholesome, but they spoiled the side they did cook.

Now I wonder if there are any unturned cakes among us. Perhaps there are. People did not stop being one-sided in the days when Hosea lived, and they have not given it up yet, so there are many good cakes still being spoiled.

What are some of the things that spoil good cakes?

Well, first there are besetting faults. You know what a besetting fault is? It is our commonest fault, the one that is always waiting ready to trip us up when we are least expecting it. It is something we tend to do wrong. Perhaps there is a besetting fault that is spoiling your cake. Perhaps

there is a whole side of you turned black and bitter because you occasionally tell a little lie, or because your teacher cannot depend on you to do your homework, and because of that fault there is a whole other side that nobody is getting the good of.

Here is somebody who is very warm-hearted and generous, but who flies into a passion about trifles. He is an unturned cake—too much done on the temper side (any is too much!) and too little done on the *patience* side.

Here is somebody else who is kind and thoughtful, but who, if he meets a bad boy or girl, just follows wherever they lead him. He is uncooked on the *will* side.

And here is someone who is very patient and painstaking, but ask him to give up or give in—and he won't move an inch. He is overdone on the obstinate side, and underdone on the *selfless* and *obliging* side.

Perhaps you may not find yourself among any of these people; but if you think for a minute, you may find some other fault—are you ever disobedient, or deceitful, or just plain lazy?—that spoils your cake too.

And there are other things that spoil cakes in a different way. Among these are the little duties we leave undone and the powers we never try to develop.

Most everyone is better at doing some things than at other things. Perhaps you like to paint, or you like music, or you are good in English. Perhaps you like to do things with a bit of wood and a few nails, or a needle and thread. You should always be trying to do these things better and better, but don't neglect the things you don't enjoy quite so much.

I once heard of an artist who never painted a picture without putting a big brown tree in the foreground. He thought himself good at painting brown trees, and so he always stuck one in the foreground of his picture. We are all inclined to have our own brown trees, things which we think we can do well, but if we let ourselves have too many of them, they can spoil us for other things.

The same is true in school. If we work only in the subjects we like, if we don't like our arithmetic or our English and never study it, we are only baking one side of our cake. The subjects we don't like are the ones we should work the hardest in, and this will keep us from becoming one-sided.

When Jesus comes, we want Him to find us with our cake cooked on both sides, but first we must learn to do many things we don't like to do.

You have read and learned about Jesus, but do you try to give Him a place in your daily life? The

Israelites knew much about their religion and their God, but they didn't bring it into their daily lives. And so their cake was only half cooked.

"Ephraim is a cake not turned." What is spoiling your cake? ●●

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## Johnny's Lost Pencil

(Continued from page 11)

because your pencil was missing and accused little Sam and Phil, and they weren't guilty at all. You think too much of that pencil and it caused you plenty of trouble."

"Yes, Johnny," Mother added. "Father is right. There is a Bible verse which says, 'Set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth.' You had better let me keep the pencil for a month just as a reminder."

"I know you are right. I did not act as a Christian should," said Johnny soberly. "You may keep the pencil Mother, as long as you say. Or better still, I will put the pencil in my desk drawer and not touch it for two months. I promise you."

"You may, Johnny, if it is all right with Father," answered Mother.

"I know you will do as you promise," said Father, "but most gratifying to me is that you see your mistake and correct it. That is the way we become better, to see where we are wrong, then watch not to fall in the same error again. This is the way to real Christian progress." ●●

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## Sweet Counsel

He gives His sweet counsel,  
As we walk the narrow way;  
He tells me the things that I should do,  
And words that I should say;  
And when sorrow comes before me,  
Hard trials I must face,  
He, bending o'er me says:  
"I'll give sufficient grace."  
'Tis joy untold to talk with Him,  
And walk close by His side:  
And oh how rich the counsel  
Of Jesus Christ my Guide!



# UNDERSTANDING THE BIBLE

"Study to shew thyself approved unto God."

## The Devil of the Bible

**T**ODAY, AS well as at every other time in the history of our nation, men seek for excuses for their evil conduct. Often it seems that what the offender lacks in the way of excuse is supplied by well-meaning outsiders. It is seldom admitted that an evil act was committed deliberately, the doer knowing full well that it was wrong. He seeks to avoid all personal responsibility for his conduct; society, circumstances or fate caused him to act that way.

The power of evil is very much in evidence in the world today and men seem powerless to put it down. And except for the criminal aspect of the evil, there is little desire to curb it because much of what God's law terms evil, man terms pleasurable.

With the passing years, the human race has become a race of pleasure-seekers. They stop at nothing that affords them a moment's pleasure, even finding gratification in witnessing violent and macabre scenes in theater and on television screens. Man's better self knows this to be wrong, but his worse self, the "old man," has become adept at making excuses. He reasons, "If God made me this way, why should I be held accountable if I act according to my nature?"

Man seeks a scapegoat for his errant conduct and theology has obligingly provided one in the form of the devil or Satan. Using theological reasoning, it is the devil that is to be blamed for the evil in the world. This, as we have proved in preceding lessons, is not Scriptural; and furthermore, it is not reasonable. The fact is that men are responsible for their deeds: the Bible provides no scapegoat in the form of a devil; and society, circumstances or fate are not to be blamed. A society in which men were not held responsible for their deeds would not long endure.

In this issue we will complete our study of the devil, covering the end of all sin and evil. We will follow our outline:

VII. Popular Concepts of the Devil (conc.)

VIII. Scripture Verses Often Misunderstood

IX. Demonism Today

X. The Devil Dethroned Forever

In fiction, not all stories have a happy ending, but God's Word, being truth and not fiction, provides a happy ending to all the evil in the world. The power of evil, the devil of the Bible, will not always rule supreme in the world. Satan will eventually be destroyed forever; sin and evil will be forever banished from the earth.

We will conclude our study on the subject of the devil by presenting proof that sin and evil, the only devil that has ever existed, will one day be unknown on this fair earth.

## VII. CONCEPTS OF THE DEVIL

### F. The Fundamentalist Concept

The concept of the devil and Satan held by most fundamentalist churches does not differ materially from that of other Protestant denominations. The belief is covered in detail in the book, **Your Adversary the Devil**, by J. D. Pentecost. From it we have gleaned the following summary:

Satan was originally Lucifer. (This agrees with the Armstrong concept.) No Scripture proof is given, but it is declared that "Before God prepared this earth as a place for human habitation, God populated the heavenly sphere with innumerable created beings, each one with his own rank, his own station and his own responsibility."

Lucifer was one of these beings, and not content with his position, desired to dethrone God and make himself sovereign of the universe. He sought, and was one-third successful in getting the support of other angelic beings. (Rev. 12:4 is given as proof of this statement.) Those who followed Satan in his original rebellion are referred to as "demons," possessing all the power and wisdom they had before their fall. These demons are no more limited by time and space than are angels.

Satan does his work through vast hosts of these fallen angels who have been assigned responsibilities under him. The writer says, "We are not dealing with an impersonal force, and we are not dealing with a principle of evil as opposed to the prin-

ciple of good. We are dealing with personalities that have been assigned by Satan to frustrate and to defeat the will of God for us . . . they dog your footsteps every moment."

He states further: "God and Satan are in a battle for the minds of men. It is the mind that Satan wants, for if he can control the mind, he can eventually control the will. . . . It may seem strange to talk about something we can't see, feel, taste, or smell. But you will not understand the nature of the warfare in which you are engaged unless you recognize that Satan is warring to control your mind every moment of every day and that his purpose is to deceive you concerning the truth of God."

We will cover a few of the obvious errors contained in the above quotation.

**1. Concerning Lucifer.** This subject needs no further discussion. **Satan was not Lucifer and Lucifer was not Satan.** We refer you to the January issue of the *Megiddo Message* for a complete explanation.

**2. Concerning the beings who populated the heavenly sphere.** The long dissertation of this subject contained in the book is but conjecture. No Scripture proof is offered for there is none to give. We cannot accept anything we cannot read in the Bible. The statement that Lucifer was one of these beings is also pure speculation and lacks Biblical support. **Lucifer was a king, a man, an earthly being who was dethroned because of his wickedness.**

**3. The war in heaven.** This subject has likewise been covered, both in this issue and in the January issue. It needs no further discussion. God's angels would not rebel against Him. The angels referred to in the Scriptures as those who fell were not angels of God's heaven, but human messengers.

**4. Satan as a personality.** It is not clear just what is meant by this statement, but **there is no personal devil or Satan. Satan exists only as the evil within the human heart.**

**5. The warfare in the heart.** The description of the warfare within the minds of men comes close to the truth, but it is not brought about by a literal devil. It is the warfare of the lower nature, described by Paul as flesh vs. spirit. "For the flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh: and these are contrary the one to the other: so that ye cannot do the things that ye would" (Gal. 5:17). This is the warfare in the heart or mind of man.

## VIII. SCRIPTURE VERSES EXPLAINED

There are a great many texts in the Bible which would lead one not knowing the truth of the Word to believe that there is a literal devil, an unseen

spirit that tempts men and women to do evil. Many of these verses have been explained in previous issues of this study. Lacking space, we will not attempt to explain every verse on the subject, but will pick out a few of the most commonly used verses. We are confident that in the light of reason and Biblical knowledge there is not one Scripture text that requires us to believe the theory of an all-powerful evil spirit that tempts men and women to sin.

### A. Old Testament Verses

It is readily admitted by Bible scholars that the word "devil" does not appear in the Old Testament in the sense it is commonly used in theology. And it is likewise conceded that the doctrine of Satan as an all-powerful figure responsible for all evil evolved at a later date than that of the Old Testament. The apocryphal books, known to have been written at a later date than the authentic Scriptures, were largely responsible for the development of the idea of Satan as a personality.

Translators of the Old Testament have not been consistent in their renderings. It is interesting to note that the same Hebrew word *stn* that is rendered "Satan" in Job is rendered "adversary" in Kings (See I Kings 5:4; 11:14, 23, and 25). This is a more correct rendering and shows the true meaning of the original word. Yet knowing these facts to be true, supporters of the literal devil or Satan theory fly to the book of Job in defense of their position.

**1. Satan and Job.** The narrative concerning Job and Satan is found in the first two chapters of the book of Job. As mentioned many times in these studies, **Satan is simply an adversary, an opposer to God** and in his encounter with Job is nothing more. At the beginning of the narrative, Job 1:6, the marginal reference in the KJV gives for Satan, "the adversary."

In this case, Satan, the adversary, is a sort of self-appointed prosecuting attorney against Job. He seeks to find some cause against him in his worship of God. Job was being tested just as Abraham was tested and God simply allowed it.

Who were these "sons of God" who came before the Lord? There is nothing to indicate they were angels as believed by some, but they were simply believers, probably a group of pious people who assembled to worship God. Among them were faithful and unfaithful, an occurrence not uncommon today. It is part of God's plan that the wheat shall not be separated from the tares until Judgment. **Wicked men are the satan, the adversary in the account.**

**2. Satan in other Old Testament verses.** There

## Can You Fill The Blanks?

The only devil is ..... and all ..... The word "devil" in the Hebrew and Greek originals signifies an ....., ....., ..... This devil is personal only as evil men and women are personal. Jesus said of ....., "Have not I chosen you twelve, and one of you is a devil?" (.....

... : ...). And to rebellious ..... He said, "Get thee behind me, ..... " (..... : ...).

The source of temptation is the ....., not an evil spirit outside (Mark 7:20-23). The book of ..... tells us, "Every man is ..... when he is drawn away of his own ....., and enticed" (..... : ...).

are comparatively few references to Satan and none to the devil of theology in the Hebrew Scriptures; but in all cases where we find it used, the meaning is consistent. Satan as used in Zechariah 3 is identified in the margin as the "adversary," as he is in Job. The satan who stood in the way of Balaam (Num. 22:22); the satan who provoked David to number Israel (I Chron. 21:1; II Sam. 24:1); and the serpent in Eden have all been covered in previous lessons. **In none of these instances can satan be proved to be other than the sinner involved. The sin comes from within the heart of man, not from a devil or satan without.**

### B. New Testament Verses

Due to the influence of the pagan nations, belief in demons and devils had become widespread by New Testament times. It is because of this that we find so many verses alluding to a devil or demon having caused the sin or sickness of an individual. Many of these references have been already covered in previous sections of this study. We will now review a few of the most commonly used testimonies on the subject.

**1. The devil that entered Judas.** In Luke 22:3 and again in John 13:2 we find reference to the devil or Satan that entered into Judas and caused him to betray his Master. **This devil or Satan was sin. Man sins because he chooses to sin.** Wm. Barclay comments: "Satan could not have entered into Judas unless Judas had opened the door. There is no handle on the outside of the door of the human heart. It must be opened from within." Mr. Barclay reasons that Judas wanted Jesus to be what he wanted Him to be and because Jesus took His own way, "Judas was so incensed that he betrayed Him. The very essence of sin is pride. The very core of sin is independence. The very heart of sin is the desire to do what we like and not what God likes. That is what the devil, or Satan stands for, ... everything which is against God."

This constitutes an excellent word picture of the devil that caused Judas to betray the Master, the

same devil behind all sin, the evil in the human heart.

**2. The devils Jesus cast out.** During Jesus' ministry He is frequently said to have "cast out" devils. Believers in a literal devil also believe that literal demons possess individuals and cause sickness and disease. In Jesus' time such superstition was perhaps due to ignorance, since a majority of the people were uneducated. To believe in literal devils and demons today, one must be willingly ignorant.

The context of the various Scripture passages where Jesus "cast out" devils or spirits reveals that it was a matter of healing or curing the one "possessed," or sick. In Matthew 12:22 the possessed one was blind and dumb and Jesus "healed him, insomuch that the blind and dumb both spake and saw." In Matthew 15 the child that was "vexed with a devil," was "made whole," or in other words healed. In Luke 11:14 we read that "when the devil was gone out, the dumb spake." Matthew records that "they brought unto him many that were possessed with devils: and he cast out the spirits with his word, and healed all that were sick: That it might be fulfilled which was spoken by Esaias [Isaiah] the prophet" (8:16-17).  **Casting out the "unclean spirits" and healing the sick were one and the same thing.**

**3. The devil as believed by Paul.** Believers in a literal devil claim that Paul taught the doctrine in his Epistles. To say this is to read into Paul's words something he did not say. Paul is thought to have referred to the devil in Eph. 2:2 with the words "the prince of the power of the air." This verse is self-explanatory: To walk according to the "prince of the power of the air," is the same as to walk according to "the course of this world." This evil power, says Paul, "now worketh in the children of disobedience." **The Christians, before their conversion, had followed the ways of the world, not the devil, as revealed in verse 3.**

Again in writing to the Ephesians, Paul said, "Neither give place to the devil" (4:27). The con-

text from which this verse is taken shows the "devil" to be the evil ways which are to be put away in favor of the "new man." The **New English Bible** rendering of verses 26 and 27 is plain: "If you are angry, do not let your anger lead you into sin; do not let sunset find you still nursing it; leave no loop-hole for the devil." Anger uncontrolled leads to sin; if we allow anger to control us we are ruled by sin—the devil.

In writing to Timothy Paul reported that he had delivered certain of the brethren "unto Satan, that they may learn not to blaspheme" (I Tim. 1:20). This satan could not be the devil of theology, else they would more likely be taught to blaspheme than not to! And Paul would not be guilty of delivering his brethren to such a one! Paul was here referring to brethren that had become opposers, adversaries of his true teachings, whom he had been compelled to cast out. He had hoped that his disciplinary measures might teach them a lesson.

Again in Timothy, Paul speaks of certain women being "turned aside unto Satan." No doubt these women had been drawn away from the truth by the allurements of the world, always the adversary of God.

4. **The devils that "believe and tremble."** The apostle James spoke these words, an obvious reference to Paul's preaching before Felix the governor. It is recorded that "Felix trembled," but it was not to the point of accepting Paul's teachings. That he was a "devil" is evident from the record in Acts: He hoped someone might offer him a bribe to free Paul, and because he was offered none, he was "willing to shew the Jews a pleasure," and "left Paul bound."

5. **The "spirits of devils" that work miracles.** In Revelation 16, John writes of a vision of unclean spirits that "come out of the mouth of the dragon, and out of the mouth of the beast, and out of the mouth of the false prophet. For they are the spirits of devils, working miracles..." (16:13-14). These "spirits of devils" are the evil workers of which we are warned in the Scriptures. Jesus warned in Matthew 24:24: "There will be false Christs and false prophets, who will rise up and show great signs and wonders, so that if it were possible, even the elect would be deceived" (Knox Trans.). The apostle John cautioned the believers: "Beloved, believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they are of God: because many false prophets are gone out into the world" (I John 4:1). The false teachers and false prophets are the "spirits of devils," or wicked men. They claim to work miracles, but their claim is false. They are the ones who will say to Jesus in that day, "Lord, Lord,

have we not prophesied in thy name? and in thy name have cast out devils? and in thy name done many wonderful works?" Jesus will answer them, "I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity" (Matt. 7:22-23). **They are the false prophets, false Christs, evil men, devils.**

6. **The devil of Revelation 12.** Popular belief holds that Revelation 12 pictures the time that Lucifer tried to assume God's throne, fomenting a war in heaven that ended with his being cast out to the earth where he became the devil or Satan.

We will not undertake to discuss this chapter in detail here, but in the light of other Scriptures, **we are confident that Revelation 12 does not teach that there is a literal devil or Satan.** We hold that there are no contradictions in the Scriptures.

The book of Revelation begins with the words: "The Revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave unto him, to shew unto his servants things which must shortly come to pass." It is a message Jesus received from His heavenly Father after His ascension, for he states further: "I am he that liveth, and was dead; and, behold, I am alive for evermore" (vs. 1, 18). The words state plainly that it is prophecy showing "things which must shortly come to pass." If, as claimed, it tells of the devil being cast to the earth, the event must have happened since the end of the first century and not at the time of the Garden of Eden!

The entire book is prophetic and, we will agree, contains many things "hard to be understood," but we cannot agree that it contains a history of the devil or Satan. Chapter 12 is but one of the visions shown the Revelator of "things which must shortly come to pass." And in this vision, as in others, the characters in the drama are symbolic. There was never a literal war in heaven, nor will there ever be such. Such thinking is incongruous. The "war in heaven" (political heaven) symbolizes the conflict that ensues when the powers of earth rise up to resist Christ at His coming. The great dragon, "that old serpent, called the Devil and Satan," symbolizes sin and evil which is to be bound at Christ's coming and completely destroyed before the Kingdom is established.

## IX. DEMONISM TODAY

In this enlightened twentieth century it seems almost unbelievable that anyone could believe in literal devils and demon possession. But according to reliable sources, the belief is growing rather than dying out.

Spiritualism has likewise grown in recent years, drawing its members from all major denominations. Says one writer, "Thousands of ministers



and laymen who, until recently, looked on spiritism as something to be abhorred, today welcome its promises." Mediums purport to transmit messages between the dead and the living.

### A. Demonism

Believers in demonic possession claim that all evil results from demon possession or oppression. Satan's work is also seen to be the cause of physical ailments. How is man to be delivered from these demons? "Through the blood of Christ. The demon could not take possession of a soul covered by the blood. We need the blood to cover us body, soul, and spirit." So reads a current treatise on demons. (No Scripture reference is given for the proof.)

Again we say that those who blame their evil impulses on the devil or a demon are only looking for a scapegoat. To use "demon obsession or possession" as an excuse for everything from an inordinate desire for money to murder is only to avoid coming to grips with the sin. All sin or evil originates in the human heart or mind, first in form of an evil thought. There is no Scripture proof that it originates in any other way. There is no such thing as a demon or devil that enters into a man.

And a sinner cannot be cleansed from his sin through the blood of Christ. It is but folly to believe thus. The Bible is rife with statements that tell how to be cleansed from sin: "Let him that stole steal no more . . ."; "Let all bitterness, and wrath, and anger, and clamour, and evil speaking, be put away from you, . . ."; "Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world"; "Lie not one to another, . . ."; "If any man speak, let him speak as the oracles of God . . ."; "For he that will love life, and see good days, let him refrain his tongue from evil, and his lips that they speak no guile . . .". (Eph. 4:28, 31; I John 2:15; Col. 3:9; I Pet. 4:11; 3:10). These are but a sampling of the many commands in the Scriptures.

**Exorcism** (the casting out of a supposed evil spirit by a ritual) is even being practiced today, not only by church members, but by clergymen. This needs little comment, since without the existence of evil spirits there is no need for casting them out. Because the people believed in spirits at the time of Jesus' ministry, the diseases He healed were often spoken of as devils or demon possession of an individual. "Demons" were the gods of the heathens; everything good or bad was thought to be the result of the action of one of the gods.

### B. Spiritualism

The late Bishop James A. Pike popularized spirit-

March, 1972

itualism in recent years by his purported contacts with his dead son through spiritualistic mediums. As a result of his much publicized seances, others have been led to consult mediums and have likewise been led to believe they have had direct connections with their beloved dead.

The Scriptures abound with proof that such contacts are not possible. Man possesses no "immortal soul" that goes to a "land of light" where it can later communicate with those on the earth. The prophet Isaiah decried such contacts many centuries ago: "Why are you trying to find out the future by consulting witches and mediums? Don't listen to their whisperings and mutterings. Can the living find out the future from the dead? Why not ask your God? 'Check these witches' words against the Word of God!' he says. 'If their messages are different than mine, it is because I have not sent them; for they have no light or truth in them' " (Isa. 8:19-20, **Living Prophecies**).

## X. THE DEVIL DETHRONED

Today, the devil or Satan, the personification of sin and evil, runs rampant throughout the world. The laws of God and man are flouted because sentence against the workers of evil is delayed through the maze known as "due process of law" in our land.

But such a condition is not always to prevail. We are promised "a new heaven and a new earth wherein dwelleth righteousness." Though all the iniquity in the earth makes such a condition seem a remote possibility, it is as certain as that tomorrow morning will dawn! How will it be effected? We will go to the Book for the answers.

### A. The Devil Bound

One of the multitude of visions shown to John the Revelator was that of an angel or messenger that came down from heaven, "having . . . a great chain in his hand. And he laid hold on the dragon, that old serpent, which is the Devil, and Satan, and bound him a thousand years" (Rev. 20:1-2). We cannot believe that this "dragon" is a literal beast, nor is he bound with a literal chain. **The dragon is representative of all evil extant upon the earth at Christ's second coming; the same devil and Satan that have been at work down through the ages.** Our reason tells us that a "bottomless pit" could not be literal, hence a literal devil could not be cast into a spiritual "pit." We are commanded to compare "spiritual things with spiritual" (I Cor. 2:13). Sufficient evidence has been given throughout these lessons to prove conclusively that there is no literal devil or satan; the

terms represent the evil and the workers of evil.

During the Millennial reign of Christ, evil will only be "bound," that is, restrained. At the end of the thousand years, before the Kingdom is established, it will be completely destroyed. The promise is: "Thou shalt not see evil any more" (Zeph. 3:15).

Again, according to the Revelator, "the devil that deceived them was cast into the lake of fire and brimstone, where the beast and the false prophet are, and shall be tormented day and night for ever and ever" (Rev. 20:10). To be "tormented day and night for ever and ever" is but his "just deserts," say the fundamentalists! Many, including Mr. Armstrong, believe the fire to be literal. A spirit being, the devil, cast into a literal fire? Again, we must use our reason and compare "spiritual things with spiritual" (I Cor. 2:13). The devil, the beast and the false prophet are all spiritual and the lake into which they are cast is also spiritual. It is identified in verse 14 as "the second death." **Death is not torment, but destruction.**

Revelation 20:10, interpreted literally, presents two impossibilities: torment and night. Included in the "former things" that are to pass away are sorrow, crying and pain (Rev. 21:14), hence torment forever would be impossible. Also, Rev. 21:25 assures us that "there shall be no night there," thus any torment or punishment would have to be necessarily limited to the space of time before God's work on earth is complete.

All sin and evil shall forever be banished from the earth; nothing but righteousness and every good will survive the great destruction of Armageddon. It will not be possible for men to sin in eternity; all will be perfect and immortal.

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

## TEST YOURSELF

1. Disprove this statement, using Bible texts: "We are not dealing with a principle of evil as opposed to a principle of good. We are dealing with personalities that have been assigned by Satan to frustrate and to defeat the will of God."
2. Who was the Satan that attended the assembly of the sons of God according to Job?
3. Explain the Satan in John 13:2: "the devil" that "put into the heart of Judas" to "betray" Christ.
4. Why was Jesus said to "cast out devils"?
5. What did Paul mean when he spoke of "the prince of the power of the air"? (Note: The people of Paul's day believed in such a superhuman

spirit, and Paul may have borrowed their terminology to describe the constant temptation that surrounds the Christian.)

6. What did Paul mean when he spoke of letting errant brethren be chastised by Satan (I Tim. 1:20)?
7. Who are the "devils" that "believe and tremble"?
8. Prove from the Bible that demonism is not overcome by believing in the atoning death of Christ for our sins. How is sin conquered?
9. What does the Bible say about consulting with spiritualist mediums or witches?
10. What will be the fate of the devil when Christ returns?
11. Explain the "torment day and night for ever" in Rev. 20:10.

## MEMORIZE

**To make your study of this subject of more lasting benefit try committing the following verses to memory. They are key verses in understanding who and what is the devil of the Bible.**

1. Psalm 38:20: "They also that render evil for good are mine adversaries; because I follow the thing that good is." The Hebrew word translated "adversaries" in this verse is translated "Satan" in numerous passages in the Old Testament, including Job 1:6-12; Zech. 3:1-2, and Ps. 109:6.

2. Acts 5:3-4: "But Peter said, Ananias, why hath Satan filled thine heart to lie to the Holy Spirit, and to keep back part of the price of the land? Whiles it remained, was it not thine own? and after it was sold, was it not in thine own power? why hast thou conceived this thing in thine heart? thou hast not lied unto men, but unto God." This text shows clearly how Satan filled the heart of Ananias to cause him to lie: "why hast thou conceived this thing in thine heart?" His own evil heart was the source of the evil.

3. I Peter 5:8-9: "Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour: whom resist steadfast in the faith, knowing that the same afflictions are accomplished in your brethren that are in the world." This text reveals the true definition of the devil: "Whom resist, . . . knowing that the same afflictions . . ." Wherever there were Christian brethren, they had the same afflictions, the same struggles, the same evil nature, the same devil to resist.

*Reprints of these studies are available upon request.*

## "Never Stop

### Until You Reach the Top"

THESE WORDS were spoken to me in surroundings quite different than these, but they were very good advice to me then and can also be applied to our daily lives as we strive toward perfection of character.

I heard these words in the army, overseas, on my first mission in the jungles. Often we stayed for long periods of time in the rugged mountainous areas. I was new in the country and had not the knowledge that is accumulated by experience in war. On this particular mission we were climbing what seemed to me a never-ending hill. I wasn't accustomed to the strain, the weight of my pack, nor the dense terrain. It was hot, and I felt I just couldn't climb one step further; so I sat down and watched as my older, more experienced comrades trudged upwards. It wasn't long before one of them said to me, while climbing by, "Never stop until you reach the top because you might get ambushed and never reach it."

Well, I listened to those words. I got up and continued on, and the terrain, because of the bombing, cleared out towards the top of the hill, making the climb less strenuous. When I did reach the top we stopped for the night. What a rest that was! That saying stayed with me on every hill after that.

In our Christian struggle upward our journey is not always easy running. There is a hill to climb with rugged terrain full of temptations: doubts, anger, worldly ways, lusts, jealousies, and all the other hindrances that must be overcome. There will be times when we feel we need a rest, even a little rest. But we must never stop on our way up this hill; for the minute we do, our upward progress has halted and the slide down has begun. There can be no stopping to rest. Our rest is on the top, when we have heard the "well done" from our Lord.

So often the mud of old lingering worldly thoughts causes us to slip and slide; we lose our footing and many of the steps we have so laboriously trod. Steps lost take double the energy and double the time to be regained. We are cautioned so many times never to look back. "No man having put his hand to the plow, and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of God," are our beloved Master's words. Paul, a true soldier in the Christian army, tells us to forget the things which are behind. Forward progress can never be accomplished if our eyes, instead of being

set on the goal, are looking behind us.

Life is a dark jungle, and we must watch our every step. Vines of temptation lay across our path and can trip us if we are not careful. The world is thick with these vines; but the Christian, with armor intact, can cut his way through. There is no vine that can't be cut, no temptation that can't be overcome if our mind is set upon reaching our destination. In this jungle we have a light to guide us—God's Word. We need never fear of getting lost with such a wonderful guide. We are also provided a map and a compass, a map that must be studied, and a compass that always points to the strait and narrow way. If we follow these, we shall never lose our way.

In war, friendships grow strong because all are going through the same hardships and experiencing the same conditions. The same holds true in our Christian warfare. We are often called upon to give a helping hand, whether it be in battle or helping the man behind us who is struggling up some mountainside. If we see a brother going through a hard trial, it is up to us to lend a helping hand. It may be that he's new in the warfare. An encouraging word or a reproof, whatever the case may be, is part of that helping hand. We are all in this battle against sin, and as in any battle, a helping hand when it is offered will be gladly and thankfully accepted. We would not think of leaving a wounded soldier; and so in the battle for perfection, first-aid given a fallen brother may well save his life.

The climb isn't always easy, and the jungle may be thick. It may be hot, very hot; there may be persecutions. There will be sores from constant treading, but they will all heal. There will be strain, but eventually the hindrances will be cleared away and the climb will become easier. Eventually the hill will level off and we'll find ourselves on top. What a wonderful rest it will be. We'll have conquered ourselves and will be welcomed into a world of peace and rest that will never end. ●●

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AS A CHURCH, we are conscientious objectors to military service, as being opposed to the law of God. We believe that taking life in war is condemned by the Bible. We must be kind to our adversaries; must follow peace with all men (Heb. 12:14), must "recompense to no man evil for evil" (Rom. 12:17). We must "do violence to no man" (Luke 3:14), because "all they that take the sword shall perish with the sword" (Matt. 26:51-52).

Therefore we do not serve in any branch of the Armed Forces, but serve under civilian direction in work of national importance (farming, forestry, hospitals, etc.).

## Navigating the Narrows

*(Continued from page 6)*

we are interested in. How far shall we go in separating ourselves from them? It is often a hard decision. Yet the command is plain: "Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers: for what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? and what communion hath light with darkness? and what concord hath Christ with Belial? or what part hath he that believeth with an infidel? and what agreement hath the temple of God with idols? for ye are the temple of the living God; as God hath said, I will dwell in them, and walk in them; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people. Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing" (II Cor. 6:14-17). And Jesus' demand comes even closer home: "He that loveth father or mother more than me is not worthy of me: and he that loveth son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me. And he that taketh not his cross, and followeth after me is not worthy of me" (Matt. 10:37-38).

Among the smaller decisions to be made by the earnest life-seeker come such questions as: Shall I change my place of employment in the interest of higher wages, in the face of the danger of more entanglement with the world, and closer confinement, leaving me less time and freedom to assist in the various forms of the Lord's work? I have two acquaintances, one always agrees with me, the other often challenges the virtue of my position; which one shall I choose as my bosom friend?

Whose advice shall I seek in spiritual matters? How much time can I spend in reading newspapers and news magazines, and do it to the glory of God? How far can I go with pleasantry before it becomes unjustified humor, or a clear case of foolishness, jesting and joking? I find myself watching the pennies, and I know that as a Christian I must practice economy, for all that I have belongs to the Lord, and must be used to His glory; but how far can I carry it before it becomes tightfistedness, or plain stinginess? To answer these questions honestly and in harmony with truth may prove a difficult narrow to navigate.

We often have to decide between right and wrong, whether to agree with other people rather than incur their displeasure, or disagree with them and hold firmly to what we believe to be the right course with a loss of their favor.

The disciples in the post-Pentecostal period were threatened by the authorities for speaking the Word of God. They had a decision to make,

and they made it without hesitancy: Peter and the other apostles answered and said, "We ought to obey God rather than men." And today when the question arises: Shall I obey God and get a cross, or shall I yield to men and get a crown? the answer should be spontaneous: "We ought to obey God rather than men."

Many a time we have yielded to get what we thought was going to be a crown only to discover that it became a cross on which every real joy and happiness of our lives was crucified. And on the other hand we have discovered that in taking up the cross of self-denial we have secured an inner peace which all the wealth of the world could not buy. The joy and peace that is ours as the result of a day spent doing as we ought so far exceeds the satisfaction of a day spent doing as we please, that there is no comparison.

It takes real seamanship to pilot our ship head-on into the straits of a solid honest decision for that which is right, but there is no other way to secure that inward peace that passeth understanding, or lay up for ourselves a good foundation against the time to come, that we "may lay hold on eternal life" (II Tim. 6:19). Only by navigating these narrows can we sail the broader expanses of expanded usefulness in God's service, or float with Christ and the good and faithful of all ages upon the ocean of eternity enjoying bliss for evermore.

### The Narrows of Discipline

The fourth narrows is discipline. If ever we are to sail the open seas of a greatly expanded usefulness in God's service, or learn to walk in all the commandments and ordinances of the Lord blameless, we first must submit to discipline.

No Christian leader can accomplish the maximum good in helping others until he first has learned to rule himself. In the Epistle to Titus, first bishop of the Church at Crete, Paul carefully spelled out the duties of a Christian bishop: "For a bishop must be blameless, as the steward of God; not self-willed, not soon angry, not given to wine, no striker, not given to filthy lucre; but a lover of hospitality, a lover of good men, sober, just, holy, temperate; holding fast the faithful word as he hath been taught, that he may be able by sound doctrine both to exhort and to convince the gainsayers" (Tit. 1:7-9). And in his directive to Timothy Paul adds another feature, the behavior of a bishop's family and children: "A bishop then must be blameless, . . . one that ruleth well his own house, having his children in subjection with all gravity" (I Tim. 3:2, 4). There had been no slackening of the Lord's demand for



quality in leadership since the days of King David, when He said: "He that ruleth over men must be just, ruling in the fear of God" (II Sam. 23:3).

No runner ever won the hundred-yard dash, amid the applause of a thousand voices, without a long and tedious period of discipline. The ease and freedom of a brilliant piano performance is the finished mastery of years of discipline, most of it tedious, exacting, and uninteresting. Whenever you find a man free from prejudice and bigotry, humbly fulfilling his duty, governed by the highest principles of Christian morality, you may be sure he was not born with those superior qualities. He is the product of discipline, and you can be sure that this freedom has come from a lifelong habit of intelligent faithfulness to the thousand details of truth.

Discipline demands repetition, the doing of the same things over and over again until they become second nature, until we become accustomed to doing good. And that brings maturity in the divine life: "But strong meat belongeth to them that are of full age, even those who by reason of use have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil" (Heb. 5:14).

As a nation we Americans are an undisciplined people. So much can be done by the pushing of a button or the turning of a switch, that we have almost lost the necessity for skills. This may be a technological gain, unless we are misled by it

to believe that character too can be attained without effort, by whim, like turning a faucet. Someone has remarked that many people these days believe religion should be like an escalator, effortlessly lifting one to a higher plane of godly living. But that cannot be. Broader sailing comes as the result of navigating the narrows, and life in the world to come is the end result of a watchful passage through the strait, difficult gate, and a careful treading of the narrow restricted way, stepping in the very footprints of our blessed Master who carefully trod the path before us.

A thoroughly honest man is the product of a lifetime of vigilant training and effort in one direction. Reverence of mind and heart can be traced back to chubby hands folded in prayer at a God-fearing mother's knee, up through years of habitual attendance of Sunday School and church services, and on into a life which many times a day faces God in thankfulness and praise. It is the result of repeated impressions of God's greatness, His goodness, the absolute certainty of His existence and omnipresence, the keen realization that wherever we are or whatever we do we cannot hide from Him. We cannot escape His all-seeing eye, for "The eyes of the Lord are in every place, beholding the evil and the good" (Prov. 15:3).

The motto, "Rules For Today," often seen hanging in Christian homes, should prove a great aid to a disciplined life:

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### The Glorious Sequel

In navigating these narrows we have been actuated by a purely selfish motive. We have done so because we believed we could get greater returns for our effort than we could get in any other way, and that is just what God wants us to do. "Take heed unto thyself, and unto the doctrine; continue in them: for in doing this thou shalt both save thyself, and them that hear thee" (I Tim. 4:16). *First save thyself*, and then them that hear thee—a case where selfishness is justifiable. The narrows are the only connecting passage to the broader expanse of waters, the ocean of eternity filled with boundless pleasure. The narrows, like the strait gate and narrow way, leads to life; abundant life, unending life, life free from pain, sorrow, disappointment, fatigue, or any of the problems that beset us today.

We do not diligently apply ourselves to the command, "Study to show thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth" (II Tim. 2:15), merely to satisfy our thirst for religious knowledge. We are convinced that Wisdom holds in her left hand riches and honor, and in her right hand length of days to enjoy them in. We do not exchange error for truth simply to satisfy an ideal that we would rather be right than have a million dollars; we realize that only truth could set us free and bring life, and we want life. We want to sail the broadest expanses, and to gain this we must submit to a restriction on our thinking, limiting our beliefs to the things God has caused to be written for our learning.

We navigate the narrows of *duty*, not for the thrill that comes from the realization of useful work well done. Faithfulness to duty may be its own reward in a limited way, but not *the* reward. Almost the closing words of the Bible are: "Blessed are they that do his commandments, that they may have right to the tree of life, and may enter in through the gates into the city" (Rev. 22:14). "Blessed are they that do His commandments, that they may have right to the tree of life," that they may sail to the endless reaches of God's mighty ocean of pleasure.

We are careful about the *decisions* we make in our temporal affairs, not merely to keep ourselves out of the toils of the law, not merely to preserve

our good name in our community; not merely to keep in the good graces of our friends, not merely for the thrill of doing right, but to navigate the broader expanses of a life that will never end. We remember the words of the beloved John: "And this is the promise that he hath promised us, even eternal life" (I John 2:25), and *we want that life*.

We submit to the narrows of *discipline*, not because of a harassing inferiority complex, not because we want to escape the effort of having to work out a suitable life pattern for ourselves. We do not accept of discipline, pass through the Straits of Gibraltar, merely to sail the more spacious Atlantic. Increased service for God, increased interest in the welfare of our brother, a higher standard of moral excellence, are sufficiently worthy ambitions to attract a man who appreciates virtue. However, they are not great enough incentives to impel a man to go the whole way. Our aim is to be able to navigate the broad Pacific, to be made equal to the angels so we can never die. Salvation is the highest goal in the Christian's life, and the only incentive strong enough to lead a reasoning man or woman to renounce everything of the flesh, to take up his or her cross daily and die with Christ to the rudiments of the world; to pass his or her sojourn here in the fear of doing wrong, to have no confidence in the flesh or surrender to any of its bewitching desires. It was for the joy set before Jesus that He endured the cross, despising the shame, and is now sitting at the right hand of His Father, and it is hope of a full reward that will urge us on to make a full and complete surrender.

We navigate the narrows with the hope that someday we can pilot our ship into a much broader expanse of waters. The patriarch Job speaks of it as a *strait* contrasted with a broad place. "Even so would he have moved thee out of the strait into a broad place, where there is no straitness" (Job 36:16). And Paul refers to it as light afflictions versus glory: "For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory" (II Cor. 4:17). And again in picturing the grand climax he said: "So when this 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).

Therefore, beloved brethren, let us be steadfast, unmovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, mindful of His holy commandments, for "IN KEEPING OF THEM THERE IS GREAT REWARD." ●●

MEGIDDO MESSAGE

# Where Is God's Power?

*A city full of churches,  
Great preachers, lettered men,  
Grand music, and great organs;  
If these all fail, what then?  
Good workers, eager, earnest,  
Who labour hour by hour;  
But where, oh where, my brother,  
Is God's Almighty power?*

*It is the godly Spirit  
That quickeneth the soul.  
God will not take vain worship,  
Nor bow to man's control.  
No human innovation,  
No skill, or worldly art,  
Can give a true repentance,  
Or break the sinner's heart.*

*Refinement: education!  
They want the very best;  
Their plans and schemes are perfect,  
They give themselves no rest;  
They get the best of talent,  
They try their uttermost,  
But what they need, my brother,  
Is the Lord God of hosts.*

*We may have human wisdom,  
Grand singing, great success;  
There may be fine equipment,  
But these things do not bless.  
God wants a pure, clean vessel,  
Anointed lips and true,  
A man filled with the Spirit,  
To speak His message through.*

*We may spend time and money  
And preach from wisdom's lore,  
But education only  
Will keep God's people poor,  
God wants not worldly wisdom,  
He seeks no smiles to win;  
But what is needed, brother,  
Is that we deal with sin!*

*Great God, revive us truly!  
And keep us every day;  
That men may all acknowledge,  
We live just as we pray.  
The Lord's hand is not shortened,  
He still delights to bless,  
If we depart from evil  
And all our sins confess.*

# LETTERS

## Modern Godlessness

Modern, materialistic, godless men have no interest in the things of God. Carnally-minded, they crave only the things of the flesh and spend their time watching TV or attending some kind of sport. Spiritual things have no appeal to them. How true are the words of Christ when He said, "When the Son of man cometh, shall he find faith on the earth?"

The eternal word of God revealed in the Bible has no place in the life of money-minded mankind, which count that time is money. Concerning salvation, the modern civilized man prefers the easy way. It is no wonder that our present political, religious, social and educational life is in a state of chaos and bewilderment!

Winnipeg, Manitoba, Canada

J. K.

## Climbing?

We must be steadfast in pursuing the upward course. As

we climb we find there are many snags of sin and selfishness and roots of bitterness and stumps of pride and stubbornness. There are glittering pools of deceit inviting us to rest, and enticing detours and forbidden paths along the way to prove us, whether or not we will rise above and beyond them.

The way is not too steep or too high if we will "let thine eyes look right on, and let thine eyelids look straight before thee. Ponder the path of thy feet, and let all thy ways be established. Turn not to the right hand or to the left: remove thy foot from evil" (Prov. 4:26-27).

Rome, Georgia

S. J.

## Learning from Paul

I've been reading of the apostle Paul's stand for the truth in his defence before Felix the governor, and Festus his successor, from J. B. Phillips' translation. One thing in point: while Paul spoke to Felix about goodness, self-control and judgment to come, Felix became alarmed. It is written that he looked for a more convenient moment to speak with Paul. The Bible doesn't state whether or not Felix was ever converted to Christianity—probably he was not.

There is much we can learn from Paul through his letters to the Christians at Rome. Paul is often referred to as the author of the Pauline doctrine, but we know that is a false claim. Paul wrote things "hard to be understood" (II Pet. 3:15-16), which the "unlearned" wrest, as they do also the other Scriptures, unto their own destruction, but his writings were not another doctrine. Neither Paul nor any other apostle was out of step with the teachings of Christ.

Wausau, Wisconsin

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# QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

## "Who is the 'deceiver and antichrist' of II John 7?"

The antichrist of the Bible does not have to be any particular person or nation, as some religious groups maintain. An antichrist is anyone opposing Christ. The Apostle said that antichrists existed even in his day (I John 2:18).

The term antichrist derives from the Greek *antichristos*, meaning "instead of Christ." It could apply to any person or power that is an antagonist of Christ. The apostle John himself defines the term in I John 2:22: "Who is a liar but he that denieth that Jesus is the Christ? He is antichrist, that denieth the Father and the Son."

"Let's say you are doing something and things start going wrong. You get upset and mad. Perhaps you have been working out your salvation and feel you are nearly through struggling. Just how far do you have to subdue these fits to know you will be saved if you were to be judged?"

God accepts nothing less than complete obedience. He commands, "Cease from anger, and forsake wrath" (Ps. 37:8-9); again, "But now ye also put off all these; anger, wrath, malice, blasphemy, filthy communication out of your mouth" (Col. 3:8). A person may be tempted to get angry, but he must train himself and control himself until he has mastered the passion, before God will give that person eternal salvation (Matt. 5:48).

God does not mean that we cannot err in human judgment, in matters which are the result of mortal limitation. For example, a misjudgment in a matter of business, if accepted in the right spirit, is not a sin. But He does demand moral perfection through growth.

"Just when can we be reckoned dead indeed unto sin (as per Romans 6:1-11)? For example, when was Paul completely planted in the likeness of Christ's death, dead with Christ, baptized into his death, freed from sin? Didn't Paul write this early in his career of gospel preaching, knowing that he would be saved if he continued?"

That is right. Not until the very end of his career did he say he had "fought a good fight" (II Tim. 4:7-8) and "finished [his] course."

Paul himself said that salvation (that is, the final, full salvation) would be the result of a continued effort: "Moreover, brethren, I declare unto you the gospel which I preached unto you, which also ye have received, and wherein ye stand; by which also ye are saved, if ye keep in memory what I preached unto you" (I Cor. 15:1-2). And again, "And you, that were sometime alienated and enemies in your mind by wicked works, yet now hath he reconciled in the body of his flesh through death, to present you holy and unblameable and unreprieveable in his sight: if ye continue in the faith grounded and settled, and be not moved away from the hope of the gospel, which ye have heard" (Col. 1:21-23). All depended on whether or not they *continued* in the faith.

"I have been investigating the subject of the spirit of man and I have a question. Does the Hebrew word *ruach*, or the Greek word *pneuma* signify a separate entity of man that has any shape, form or intelligence?"

According to Strong's *Exhaustive Concordance*, the Hebrew word *ruach* is derived from the root word of the verb meaning "to blow, i. e. breathe; (lit.) to smell." Ruach is defined as "wind; by resemblance, breath, i. e. a sensible (or violent) exhalation; figuratively, life, anger, unsubstantiality," etc. Gesenius' *Hebrew and English Lexicon* defines *ruach* as "spirit, breath, breath of the mouth, . . . vital spirit (Job 17:1; 19:17); more fully, to return the breath, to respire; also breath of the nostrils, snuffing, snorting; hence anger; also breath of air, air in motion, i. e. breeze (Job 41:8). It is more often the wind, a storm, . . . wind of a quarter of heaven; . . . anima, breath, life, whether of men or of beasts, Eccl. 3:21; 8:8. Metaphorically used of any one stupified with astonishment and admiration, I Kings 10:5. . . the rational mind or spirit, as the seat of the senses, affections, and emotions of various kinds; . . . as to the mode of thinking and acting, . . . It is sometimes used of a spirit or disposition common to many. . . It is applied to the intellect; . . . the Spirit of God, rarely the divine power, which, like the wind and the breath, cannot be perceived, and by which animated beings live, Job 27:3; 33:4; Ps. 104:29; by which all the universe is animated, filled with life and governed; . . . Especially the divine Spirit, . . . in the golden age [the reign of the Messiah] it is to be conferred upon all men, according to Joel 3:1; Isa. 44:3; 59:21."

As for the Greek word *pneuma*, Liddell and Scott's *Greek-English Lexicon* gives the following: "wind, air; . . . the air we breathe, breath, . . . to

collect breath, . . . also breathing, respiration; . . . spirit, life; . . . also . . . divine spirit, inspiration [not used in Scripture]; a spirit, spiritual being, Luke 4:33, Matthew 8:16." (This last definition refers to the spirits which the ancients believed to be the cause of human illness, and which Jesus "cast out" or "healed.") The definitions of *pneuma* in Strong's *Exhaustive Concordance* are the same.

It is interesting to note that there is no definition given which suggests a separate entity of man that has any shape, form or intelligence. Nor does the Bible support such a thought. A living man has breath; when he dies, he ceases to breathe and his breath returns to the great reservoir of air that surrounds the earth.

"In your Pre-Existence Leaflet, on page 14, you state that the Law of Faith was also advanced by Moses. Do you have a past article on this? Or can you give me the verses? It would be an excellent article to do. I have always been interested."

The statement on page 14 reads: "Alongside the Mosaic Law was always the Law of Faith (also advanced by Moses), that more potent system of the teaching of right living by which those who wished to become godly through and through could accomplish that great end."

There are a number of Biblical statements that uphold this viewpoint. Abraham possessed and obeyed the Law of Faith about five hundred years before the Mosaic Law on Sinai was given. Genesis 15:6 reads, "And he [Abraham] believed in the Lord; and he counted it to him for righteousness." Then if we add to this Gen. 17:1, we see the potency of the then-existing Law of Faith: "And when Abram was ninety years old and nine, the Lord appeared to Abram, and said unto him, I am the Almighty God; walk before me, and be thou perfect."

Galatians 3:19 reveals that the Mosaic Law was *added*: "Wherefore then serveth the law? It was added because of transgressions, till the seed should come to whom the promise was made; and it was ordained by angels in the hand of a mediator." This last statement identifies the "law" as the law of Moses. If that law was "added," another law must already have existed to which it could be added.

Furthermore, the history of faithful adherents to this Law of Faith during the forty-years' wandering in the wilderness points up the existence of the two laws during that time: Caleb, who "wholly followed the Lord," and his associate Joshua (Deut. 1:36, 38). • •



## Meditations on the Word

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we can be sure that Paul is not speaking of the good works which he so often recommends and commands, for in these works boasting is automatically excluded as a work of the flesh, the kind of works of which we are told, "They which do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God." The instant a man begins to boast, he marks himself as a non-Christian, and his works are not acceptable. The Bible speaks of various kinds of works, some good and some bad. Boasting can be connected only with bad works.

It is true that a barren legalism—meticulous observance of the letter of the law without its spirit—always gives rise to comparison and boasting; and this legalism was the essence of the Judaism of Paul's day. The attitude is well illustrated in the parable of the Pharisee, who boasted in prayer, "I fast twice in the week. . . ." It does not affect my daily living or my relations with my fellow men, but the Law prescribes fasting, therefore if I fast twice a week, I am twice as holy as the man who fasts only once—and so on, *ad nauseam*.

In Matthew 6, Jesus condemns this type of "works," whether fasting, prayer, or almsgiving, as ostentatious, hypocritical, and worthless for salvation. This was the sort of works against which Luther, fifteen centuries later, rebelled. He was an enemy of good works as the Bible defines them, violently opposed to the principle of "Work out your own salvation," and willing to drop the Epistle of James from the canon: but he was repelled by a church which had become completely legalistic and pharisaical. "Works" in his time meant penances, prayers, pilgrimages, and payments—especially payments. Nor has the system changed in the Mother Church, as the schedules of penances and indulgences will prove. A virtue is made of repetition; ten *Aves* are more potent than one, and a hundred still more so. The quaint Buddhist custom of multiplying virtue by the use of prayer flags and prayer wheels is just as logical, and more ingenious.

With such works God is not well pleased, nor with any which lead to boasting. This is a personal matter which touches us all, for none of us is wholly beyond temptation on this point. Actions which, properly motivated and performed in humility, could be fruits of the Spirit, are ruined by pride and self-righteousness, and become unacceptable to God.

A major problem of the First Century Church, and still a problem to some, was the Law of Moses,

which had become a dead letter, expiring by limitation, but which the Jews obstinately refused to relinquish. The works of a defunct law could never bring salvation, no matter how zealously or sincerely performed. Paul pleads with his Jewish brethren to accept the change. Righteousness will save, he assures them (Rom. 9:31-32; 10:1-3) but not Levitical righteousness, or their self-righteousness.

Without exception, those who fly to our meditation text for support stop short of the 10th verse, and for good reason: "For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them."

Let us not forget the words of our Master: "Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven" (Matt. 5:16). Again in the last Letter given to humanity, Jesus' voice comes ringing down through the ages, saying: "Behold, I come quickly; and my reward is with me, to give every man according as his work shall be."

This do, and there will be no place for boasting, but rather a profound and Christlike humility. ●●

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### The Lord Needs You

I'll go where you want me to go, dear Lord,  
Real service is what I desire;  
I'll say what you want me to say, dear Lord,  
But don't ask me to sing in the choir.  
I'll be what you want me to be, dear Lord,  
I like to see things come to pass,  
But don't ask me the Gospel to spread,  
dear Lord,  
I'm not of the "Gospellers' " class.  
I'll give the good work a hand, dear Lord,  
When I get a little more time;  
But just now—you know how it is, dear  
Lord—  
I must earn some more dollars and dimes.  
I'll do what you want me to do, dear Lord,  
I yearn for the Kingdom to thrive,  
And as soon as I've filled all my barns, dear  
Lord,  
I'll sponsor a "Kingdom Drive."

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He who cannot forgive others breaks the bridge over which he must pass himself, for we all need to be forgiven.



# Meditations

## On the Word

IT IS often said, and truly, that when people ask advice, what they really want is confirmation of their own ideas. Nowhere is this truer than in the average person's approach to the Bible. While giving the Book lip-service as the standard of belief and the fount of all pure doctrine, they come to it with a grim determination to make it conform to their own particular creed or notion.

Needless to say, they have succeeded; for the words of God, like those of men, can be wrested and handled dishonestly, and thus made—or, better, apparently made—to prove anything and everything. It can be done, but the violence that is done to reason, common sense, honesty, and the Scriptural facts, is appalling.

Some years ago our missionaries were invited to fill the pulpit of a church in this State. The discourse was on the nature of man. Scores of texts were presented showing man is mortal, and immortality is conditional. In the audience was a visiting minister, listening with increasing disapproval. Finally he challenged the speaker, and a lively discussion ensued. More evidence was rained upon him, to no avail. Excitedly he shouted, "I've got one text here that will overthrow all that!" The text quoted demolished his false theory; but the point is: He, a minister, was willing to nullify all the Bible if only he might establish the creed in which he had been tutored!

How many times we have heard our meditation text used in some reprehensible way! While admitting that there is much in the Book which conditions salvation upon good works, the idea is too exacting to be popular, so the Jesus-did-it-all partisan invariably flies to this passage, which has been a choice morsel to his kind for many centuries: "By grace are ye saved through

faith, . . . not of works, lest any man should boast." To them, this is it; and the rest of the Bible can be ignored as "out of step." The fact that a glaring contradiction is thus created is passed lightly by; better that than good works!

Upon analysis, or even upon a careful, honest reading, this passage positively will not sustain the lazy view of salvation. Let us take it apart and see what it looks like, being careful to put it back together just as we found it.

"By grace are ye saved." People think they know how to define grace; but do they? God's definition is not man's. Titus 2:11-12, leaves no room for doubt: "The grace of God that bringeth salvation . . . [teacheth] us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly in this present world." Does that sound like "unmerited favor"? Could "grace" be more inseparably coupled with good works? This grace brings salvation, and we are told in Romans 1:16 and I Cor. 15:1-2, that salvation comes by obedience to the gospel, which, then, is grace, truth, the Word of God.

"Through faith." But certainly not by faith only, or by a dead or barren faith. "Without faith it is impossible to please" God, for James assures us three times in one chapter (2:17, 20, 26) that faith without works is dead.

"And that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God." We can all agree that it is of the Lord's mercies that we have received His truth; it certainly never came from our own minds. Both the gospel and its rewards are gifts of God. The story is all straight and harmonious thus far: but here is the test: "Not of works, lest any man should boast."

Well, on the very face of it,  
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*"For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: not of works, lest any man should boast." —Ephesians 2:8-9.*



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Well, on the very face of it,  
(Continued on page 26)

Not Yet--

But Surely

*We see not yet the throne of Christ uplifted,  
Nor yet all nations bowed to His command;  
Sorrow and sin His heritage have sifted,  
He has not yet the sceptre in His hand;  
But we see Jesus, clothed in power supernal,  
The keys of death and hell are His alone;  
And He shall come, our Saviour, King Eternal,  
To reign in glory, saving all His own.*

*We see not yet the holy consummation  
When He shall rule, commanding every eye;  
But we endure, amid earth's sharp negation,  
As seeing One invisible on high;  
The King is coming, to His own appearing,  
And we would serve, nor shall we serve in vain  
For we know surely that the hour is nearing  
When He shall come with kingly power and reign.*