



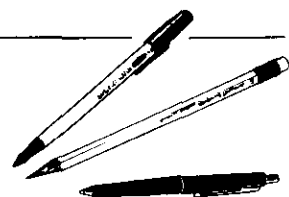
Megiddo Message

*"Now is Christ risen from the
dead, and become the firstfruits
of them that slept." —I Cor. 15:20*

Vol. 69, No. 4

Good News—Resurrection

April, 1982



Warnings, Warnings

WARNINGS have a special message for us. They tell us that there are troubles we *can* avoid. There are warnings on the highway, to help us avoid accidents. Warnings to "Slow Down," "Keep Right," "Yield." Warnings of "No Parking," "No Standing," and "No Stopping Except for Repairs." All are posted in the best interests of the driver, to give firm, stern warning.

Which is to say that some accidents, some mishaps are avoidable.

Warnings penetrate every level of activity in our world. By proper warnings, students are made aware of difficulties they may encounter. Workmen are alerted to trouble areas which require extreme care or extra attention. Parents warn children of almost countless dangers of which they are unaware—things too hot, too hard, too sharp, too cold, too high, too deep. How great our need for warnings.

The very idea of warning is two-fold. First is its suggestion that there is possibility of trouble ahead. Second is the suggestion that that trouble *need not be ours* if we are willing to take the proper course of action. Warnings tell us that this particular trouble need not be.

If trouble were unavoidable, warning would be needless. One does not warn a friend of the possibility of trouble unless the friend is doing something which may seem to invite trouble.

Again, warnings are issued in advance of trouble, not after the trouble has descended. One does not warn a person against contracting a cold who already has a cold. Warnings are issued when dangers are imminent. They are sounded against approaching hurricanes, floods, and natural disasters so that people may use the time remaining to escape, prepare or find refuge.

Warnings also tell us that we are not self-sufficient, that if we would avoid trouble we need help. They also tell us that someone else knows more than we do, someone is more aware, more informed, more perceptive—else what the need of a warning? In accepting a warning we are recognizing that fact. We are saying, in effect, "You know more than I do, and I'm glad you do—I'll listen."

God also provides warnings. He has promised a new

glorified earth, but He has also warned that a time of trouble will intervene. Before that new world can become a reality, there must be a time of decision, separation, judgment. There will be broad, sweeping changes that will affect every living person on earth. That time will be inaugurated with a Judgment for His servants. All who have agreed to serve God will have to stand or fall according to their record. He has given the warning. By giving the warning, He is saying that there is danger of not standing. He is saying also that there is a sure means of standing, of escaping the dreadful consequences of rejection, and that sure means of escape is a wholehearted dedication right here and now.

Will we hear the warning? Will we heed it?

Paul also gave warning to his brethren. His first letter to the Corinthians contains many a stinging rebuttal. They were deep in sin. They needed to be informed of the error of their ways; they needed also to be informed of the grievous ending of sin, that "the wages of sin is death." This is why Paul wrote them these words: "I write not these things to shame you, but as my beloved sons I warn you" (I Cor. 4:14). Notice how warmly he addressed them; as my "beloved sons." Paul cared for them with a tender, fatherly care. He wanted to see them have the best. But they could have the best only by avoiding the worst. If they continued their present course, they were sure to meet ruin and the worst.

Warnings are given not to be a grievance and a source of complaint, but to be appreciated. A warning sign of "Bridge Out" will be welcomed by the driver who hopes to arrive home safely. The warning tells him there is another way than to plunge into the rocky abyss. Just so do the warnings God has given inform us. They tell us we need not travel the dead-end road. There is another way, a way out.

This is precisely why the Bible has been written and preserved for us, to show us a means of escape—escape from ourselves, escape from evil, escape from the coming time of trouble which will rend the foundations of wickedness. Warnings...warnings....

Who will take warning? Who will be shamed? Who will "hearken and hear, for the time to come"? MM

Megiddo means

"a place of troops" (Gesenius' Hebrew Lexicon); "a place of God" (Young's Analytical Concordance). Megiddo was and is a town in Palestine, strategically located, and the scene of frequent warfare. In the spiritual parallel, it is a place where soldiers engaged in spiritual warfare gather to renew their strength and courage (II Cor. 10:4-5).

We believe

—in God the Creator of all things, all men, and all life.

We believe

—in the Bible as containing the genuine revelation of God and His purposes for men, and as being our only source of divine knowledge today.

We believe

—in Christ the Son of God and our Perfect Example, who was born of a Virgin, ministered among men, was crucified, resurrected, and taken to heaven, and who shall shortly return to be king of the whole earth.

We believe

—in life as the gift of God, and in our sacred responsibility to use it for God and His coming Kingdom.

We believe

—in all mankind as providing the nucleus from which a superior, God-honoring people shall be chosen to receive the blessings of immortal life.

We believe

—in ourselves as capable of fulfilling the demands and disciplines given us in the law of God, thus perfecting that high quality of character which God has promised to reward with life everlasting in His heavenly Kingdom on earth.

We believe

—in the promise of God, that a new age is coming—is near—when the earth will be filled with His glory, His people, and His will be done here as it is now done in heaven.

Bible quotations in this issue:

Unidentified quotations are from the King James Version. Other versions are identified as follows:

NEB—New English Bible

NIV—New International Version

NAS—New American Standard

RSV—Revised Standard Version

TLB—The Living Bible

TEV—Today's English Version

JB—The Jerusalem Bible, Reader's Edition

Phillips—The New Testament in Modern English

The use of selected references from various versions of the Bible does not necessarily imply publisher endorsement of the versions in their entirety.

About Our Cover...

For our cover photograph we are indebted to the kindness of D. C. Lowe, who resides in Oregon. The photograph was taken near Hoh River, Washington Coast.

Megiddo Message

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Good News—Resurrection!

RESURRECTION. It is the word at the very heart of Christian faith. Indeed, where would we be without its heartstirring message? What basis have we for hope or faith or belief in future life if there be no resurrection of the dead? If today Jesus Christ is sleeping, silent in that Judean sepulcher, what hope is there for us?

Resurrection. It is a word of power and might, so powerful and so mighty that only God can give it meaning. What is mightier than life, renewed life, life that triumphs over death? Yet what mortal has the slightest power to renew life? There is no theme of Scripture more commanding, more vibrant, more vital.

The word resurrection comes from a combining of Greek words and means literally a "standing up again," as though God took a man in a prone position, picked him up and stood him on his feet. It means also the restoring of breath and the imparting of life and being, which only God can do.

Only God Can Give Life

It is difficult for us to appreciate our total dependence upon God. Without His sustaining power, we would be as helpless as the stones on which we walk. We simply would not be. Apart from God there is no life. We are indebted to God even for this present life, though it is possible to continue to live without giving Him thought. But when this span is over, what can we do then? What mortal can perpetuate or restore life? Even Jesus had no power to raise Himself from death. The mob could take His life, but only God could restore it.

This fact is stated plainly several times in the New Testament: "Whom God raised from the dead. . . knowing that he which raised up the Lord Jesus. . . God hath. . . raised up the Lord" (Acts 4:10; II Cor. 4:14; I Cor. 6:14).

We cannot ponder too deeply or too seriously the meaning of the resurrection. What good news it was to

those distraught disciples who had seen their Lord and Master taken away, condemned, and—horror surpassing all horrors—crucified! What an end to so promising a career, so living and vital a message as He had proclaimed of God and righteousness and the coming Kingdom. Suddenly the whole vision seemed to have perished in an act of violence. What were they to do? What *could* they do?

But then came the morning of Abib 15 and the ringing good news: "He is not here, he is risen!" What more startling message could have awakened their spirits! It was the news, the good news of resurrection. How it electrified their being, changing them from hesitating, faltering witnesses into bold, dynamic and intrepid testimonials of faith.

Paul Believed in the Resurrection

The resurrection was an event witnessed by more than a few; but even brethren beyond its reach felt the impact. The apostle Paul was one of these. He was not an on-the-scene reporter, but he was well equipped to testify to its verity because he had indeed seen the risen Christ. That light from heaven shining above the brightness of the noonday sun that had struck him to the ground, blinded him, and sent him on to Damascus a changed man, was not figment of his imagination. It was real. What was it? What changed him? It was the voice of the resurrected Christ. Was Christ really alive? There was no question. And all through his career, whenever he preached, or wrote, or talked, this theme was on his mind. When he saw the city of Athens wholly given to idolatry, he preached unto them "Jesus and the resurrection" (Acts 17:16-18).

When arraigned before the council, he immediately directed their attention to the subject of the resurrection when he perceived that the one part were Sadducees and the other Pharisees, saying, "Of the hope and the resurrection of the dead I am called in question" (Acts 23:6).

Five days later, when answering an accusation made by one Tertullus, the one accusation to which he would honestly admit and with a clear conscience was his belief in the resurrection. These are his words: "But this I

Note: *Good News—Resurrection* is available as a complete church service on cassette. Price: \$3.00

confess unto thee, that after the way which they call heresy, so worship I the God of my fathers, believing all things which are written in the law and in the prophets: and have hope toward God, which they themselves also allow, that there shall be a resurrection of the dead, both of the just and unjust. And herein do I exercise myself, to have always a conscience void of offence toward God, and toward men" (Acts 24:14-16).

Standing before King Agrippa, he again broached the subject, fearless and forthright, saying, "I stand and am judged for the hope of the promise made of God unto our fathers: unto which promise our twelve tribes, instantly serving God day and night, hope to come. Why should it be thought a thing incredible with you, that God should raise the dead?" (Acts 26:6-8).

Paul felt that the resurrection of Jesus had tremendous import upon Christian faith. Should we feel otherwise? Can we not appreciate the meaning that comes with a realization that death can be conquered, that God can redeem, even from the grave, that mortality need not be our final conquerer? Should not this fact fill us with enthusiasm to serve and obey Him and so be granted someday this same deliverance and freedom?

There is a line in a prayer of the Upanishads which expresses what the resurrection does for us. It reads: "Lead me to the other side of darkness." The resurrection does just that. It leads us to the other side of the darkness where the light of the morning shines forever. It leads, and we eagerly follow its leadings, for do we not, everyone of us, long for eternal life and light?

But there is always the need to defend our beliefs, even to ourselves; for who does not struggle with doubt? This is why the apostle Paul included a lengthy and detailed discourse on the resurrection in his First Epistle to the Corinthians. Corinth was a city in the heart of a pagan nation, and time and time again paganism was the root of the trouble in the Church. There was no escaping it; there was no denying it; there was only one thing to do about it: Deal with it. And what better force could be applied against it than a strong, unshakable confidence in God and the divine certitudes of Christian faith?

Foremost among these was belief in the resurrection.

Paul Defending His Belief in the Resurrection

When Paul wrote the Epistle we call First Corinthians, it seems likely that news had reached him that some in the Church were doubting the resurrection. We can be grateful that the question evoked such a carefully considered dissertation on the part of the great Apostle. Without this masterful discussion, we might have many unanswered questions.

The resurrection was at the heart of the young Church's faith. It formed the primary supporting pillar.

Resurrection is the word at the very heart of Christian faith.

Without this faith, there could have been no Christian Church, for its message centered in Christ—living, crucified, resurrected, ascended and glorified, and someday to return in glory with all His holy angels. Without the resurrection, the movement begun by Christ would have ended in nothingness.

In First Corinthians 15, Paul delivers a forthright and unquestioning defense of the gospel of the resurrection. These are his words as translated by William Barclay:

"Brothers, I want to make clear to you the nature of the good news that I preached to you, that gospel which you also received, and in which you stand, and through which you are saved. I want to make clear to you what account I gave you of the good news, an account which can save you if you hold fast to it, unless your belief is a random and haphazard thing.

"In the very forefront of it, I handed on to you what I myself received, that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, and that He was laid in the tomb, and that He was raised up on the third day, according to the scriptures, and that He was seen by Cephas, and then by the Twelve, and then He was seen by more than five hundred brothers all at the one time, of whom the majority are still alive, although some have fallen asleep. After that He was seen by James, then by all the apostles, and last of all He was seen by me, too, for I am the least of the apostles; in fact, I am not fit to be called an apostle because I persecuted the Church of God. It is by the grace of God that I am what I am, and His grace to me has not proved ineffective, but I have toiled more exceedingly than all of them" (1 Cor. 15:1-10).

Such a magnificent defense of the resurrection. Such good news! and it was not news that he had invented. It had all happened according to the Scriptures, just as the prophets had foretold; and it had all been abundantly confirmed by living witnesses. Even as Paul wrote, the resurrection could be affirmed because most of the five hundred brethren who saw Him were still living. It was something like giving a report of World War II today. Even the most hardheaded skeptic could not question that it occurred because many of the people living now were living then and saw it. To them it was firsthand information, and if there was any distorting of the account or twisting of the facts, they would be quick enough to straighten it out.

Good News with Power

But let us note a few outstanding points about the power of this good news of the resurrection. First, it was something the brethren had received. No one had invented it for himself. It was something received as a blessing from heaven. Second, it was something in which they stood. The primary quality of the good news was to give them stability. In a dangerous and slippery world, it kept them on their feet. In a tempting and seducing world, it gave them power to resist. Moffatt's translation of Job 4:4 reveals this same power of the gospel: "Your words have kept men on their feet."

Then, it was something by which they could be saved if they kept it in memory, "unless ye have believed in vain." There was always the possibility of forgetting and so losing out on the promises enwrapped in the good news. It was something to keep in memory.

Then it was something which must not be held haphazardly and at random. The faith which collapses is the faith which has not thought things out and thought things through. For so many, faith is a superficial thing. God forbid that it ever be so to us. Faith must live. Faith must grow. Faith must bear fruit. And in order to do this,

it cannot depend on someone else's conviction. It cannot be something which we entertain haphazardly and at random. Ours must be ordered, prescribed, specific belief in the realities of God's revealed word. Nothing less can give us sustaining faith.

Dead Men DO Rise

But let us look further into Paul's mighty discourse on the good news of resurrection. He proceeds in the next verses to tell why this gospel is such good news. It is a matter of simple, convincing logic. "How say some among you that there is no resurrection of the dead?" They said flatly, "Dead men do not rise." But hear Paul's answer: If there is no such thing as resurrection, if dead men do not rise, then Christ has not been raised. And if Christ has not been raised, then our faith and our preaching are for naught, and we are without hope. Then they also which are fallen asleep in Christ are perished" (I Cor. 15:12-19). But glorious good news. Christ has been raised from the dead. I am a witness, he says. I am as sure of it as of my own existence. It is just impossible to cause me to doubt. "Now is Christ risen from the dead and become the first fruits of them that slept" (v. 20).

Let Us Pray...

Dear Father, we rejoice that we are permitted to meet once more to have our faith in Thy great and precious promises strengthened. We rejoice in the great buttress to our hope provided by the resurrection of Thy dear Son from death. Wicked men of His time took His life, but Death was not able to keep its prey; Thou wert able to restore that life. Jesus by His holy daily living proved Himself worthy of a resurrection from the dead. Thou didst step in and resurrect Him, breaking the bands of death, showing Thy power and the ability to reward each perfect life with life eternal. May it be an assurance to us that a life well lived will not go unrewarded. The same process will produce the same result each time it is repeated. Life eternal in the world to come will be the reward for faithful service here and now. Only through a resurrection from the dead could Christ be tendered His reward, hence the importance of a physical resurrection. He has been raised from the dead and given life eternal. He was the firstfruits of them that sleep, and He now lives in the power of an endless life.

Father, we thank Thee for an outline of Thy grand

purpose on earth, that the time is near when Thou wilt break Thy long silence and revive Thy work in the midst of the years, that Thy dear Son shall return to earth vested with power to take the reins of government into His own hands, destroying the forces of evil and inaugurating Thy glorious Kingdom.

May this hour be an hour of heartsearching, and may each day be spent in watchfulness, forcing down the evil and forcing up the good. May we realize that if ever we awake with Thy likeness at the dawn of Eternity's day, we must now awake to righteousness and sin not, put on the character of the Lord Jesus Christ, and make no provision for the flesh to fulfill any of its unlawful desires.

Grant, Father, that our intimate association with self may not blind us to our true character, but may we see ourselves as Thou dost see us, learn to abhor evil, loathe ourselves for the many times we have transgressed Thy holy law, and resolve here and now that the sins which have held us back shall hold us back no longer.

Be with us in this service. Be with all who are striving to learn and live Thy saving truth, with those carrying on under adverse circumstances. Strengthen and sustain them as Thou hast promised.

Wilt Thou forgive us for every sin we have confessed and forsaken. And when we have continued faithful to the end, grant us an abundant entrance into Thy eternal Kingdom. In Jesus' name. Amen.

The resurrection is the key to all hope. "If the dead are not raised to life at all, why do we face these dangers hour by hour? If the dead are never raised to life, 'let us eat and drink, for tomorrow we die'" (vs. 30-32, NEB). If there is no such thing as resurrection, why make sacrifices for Christ even to the point of risking our lives?

But no, Christ was convinced that there is a future. There is life beyond death. "Every man in his own order: Christ the firstfruits; afterward they that are Christ's at his coming" (v. 23). "For this reason, come back to your senses as you ought, and stop sinning; for there are some who are ignorant of God—I say this to your shame" (vs. 33-34, NIV). He knew, and he knew his hearers knew, that his words were true. He had received his knowledge direct from the risen Christ Himself, and they had learned from Him; so there was no chance of mistake.

Aspects of the Resurrection: "Sowing"

Then beginning with verse 35, Paul launches into the various aspects of resurrection, what we today would call the what, how and why aspects of it. "How are the dead raised up? and with what body do they come?" His answer implies a basically simple interpretation. "Thou fool," as if to say, "Why do you ask something you know so well?" But it is well that the question was asked, and his answer preserved, because many are the misinterpretations extant.

He answers: "Thou fool, that which thou sowest is not quickened, except it die" (vs. 35-36). It is at this point that theology has read into the text a meaning which, if accepted literally, would mean that anyone who receives immortality must first go through physical death, an idea not found in Scripture. Did not Jesus say, "Whosoever liveth and believeth in me shall never die" (John 11:26).

What, then, was Paul saying? To understand, we must pick up his meaning of the words rendered "sowing." The Greek word is *spiro*, and means "To sow, as seed, generally to scatter like seed; strew; throw about." When grain was sown, it was cast out upon the ground. Might not this be Paul's thought, that the resurrected body is first cast out upon the surface of the ground, brought forth from the grave?

"Quickening"

This is contrary to the popular idea which thinks of sowing as a body being buried in the earth. But we must seek an understanding which will harmonize with the general teaching of Scripture. "That which thou sowest is not quickened, except it die." To "quicken" is to cause to live, make alive, give life; in this case, eternal life. The same word may be used of giving either mortal or immortal life. And the quickening may be done either by God or by one whom He authorizes, as Jesus tells us in

Paul felt that the resurrection of Jesus had tremendous import upon Christian faith. Should we feel otherwise?

John 5:21. "For as the Father raiseth up the dead, and quickeneth them; even so the Son quickeneth whom he will."

Now what do we have? The resurrection bodies are first sown, or cast out upon the surface of the ground, brought forth from the grave to be judged. They are then quickened, if . . .

What is the criteria for quickening? What are the conditions upon which the resurrected body will be quickened with new immortal life? "That which thou sowest is not quickened, except it die." Death in the Bible is not always meant to convey the thought of literal death. There is natural death, as, "Abraham died in a good old age" (Gen. 25:8). There is also penal death, also called the "second death" (Rev. 20:14). Then there is also death to sin, which the apostle Paul spoke of frequently, as in Romans 6:10: "For in that he died, he died unto sin once: But in that he liveth, he liveth unto God." This is the death which is the condition for quickening after the resurrection.

It is interesting to note that the original words translated "except it die" are part of a past tense conditional clause which might read literally "except it died" or "except it be dead." All depends on what that individual did during his or her day of opportunity, whether that person died completely to sin or not. And if not already "dead" at the time of the resurrection, there is no further opportunity.

Now let us read verse 36, applying the definitions we have gleaned: "Thou fool, that which thou sowest [that which is cast out of the grave] is not quickened [or raised to immortal life] except it die [except it have died to sin during its mortal life]."

Rewards to Be Dispensed

In the next few verses Paul turns to a detailed discussion of the Judgment and of the rewards that will be dispensed. It is a subject ever on his mind, and using various analogies, figures and symbols, he compares the achievements of those who through the ages have sought God's approval.

The resurrection was at the heart of the young Church's faith. Without it there could have been no Christian Church.

Verse 37: "And that which thou sowest, thou sowest not that body that shall be, but bare grain, it may chance of wheat, or of some other grain." It may "chance," but the meaning is not "chance" or happenstance. It is all "to every man, according as his work may be." That which is "sown" or cast out of the grave at the resurrection is simply restored to a state of life. It is not at that point what it shall be, but only a mortal, living being. The Judgment will determine its identity. It may "chance of wheat, or of some other grain." The Judgment will declare. The just Judge will know. And whatever He decrees will be right and final.

Oh, let us never forget that coming day of reckoning, for should we be less than the wheat or grain we set out to be, it will be too late to make amends. Now is the time for us to become what we will want to be then.

"God giveth it a body as it hath pleased him, and to every seed his own body" (v. 38). As with the literal seed, like begets like, so in the spiritual application. The principle is unaltering: "To give every man, according as his works shall be," "to every seed his own body."

He then takes up some details of acceptance and rejection. First he discusses degrees of unfaithfulness as different kinds of flesh. "All flesh is not the same flesh." There is one of men, another of beasts, another of fishes, and another of birds (v. 39). All are not equal. There are various degrees of unfaithfulness.

Celestial vs. Terrestrial

Then he speaks of "celestial bodies" and "bodies terrestrial." These two terms may apply to two levels of the faithful, or morally perfect, the "celestial" being those who have received their reward and been glorified (Phil. 3:20-21); the "terrestrial," those who have attained perfection of character but have not yet, at the time of the resurrection, been recipients of the physical change to immortality.

"The glory of the celestial is one, and the glory of the terrestrial is another." Both have glory, but the glory of those still mortal, the terrestrial, though they are morally perfect, cannot compare with that of the immortals,

whose mortal bodies have been changed and made like to that of Christ. Before the program is complete all the "terrestrial" will be transformed into "celestial," but Paul is discussing the time of the resurrection when the resurrected mortals who formed perfect characters are still "terrestrial."

But even after the "terrestrial" are made "celestial," there will still be varying degrees of glory among them, as Paul suggests by mentioning the different glories of the "sun, moon, and stars" (v. 41). Each receives a full measure of reward, the "full reward," according to his works, but the rewards differ in magnitude, depending on the capacity of each recipient to appreciate that reward. It is the same as Jesus illustrated in the Parable of the Sower, when the seed that fell into the good and honest heart grew and yielded fruit, "some an hundredfold, some sixty, some thirty" (Matt. 13:23). Each yielded its full measure of fruit unto eternal life and received its reward, but the rewards differed according to the capacity of each recipient.

Jesus illustrated the same lesson in the Parable of the Pounds. To each servant the nobleman entrusted a given number of pounds. One servant used his ten pounds and was able to gain another ten pounds. His work was accepted. Another servant, having only five pounds, used his five, and his work was approved. Both received reward, representing eternal life. But the glory of the one was greater, commensurate to his work.

"So Also Is the Resurrection"

In verse 42 lies the key to the entire passage: "So also is the resurrection of the dead." This has been Paul's subject from the beginning of the chapter, the good news of the resurrection. It is a fact he keeps continually in mind.

Then he continues: "It is sown in corruption, it is raised in incorruption." Let us remember that he is talking about the resurrection, not death and burial. The sowing is as in verse 36, the scattering or casting out of the seed, the raising of the dead from the grave to the level of the living mortals. The body is "sown in corruption," brought from the grave still mortal, corruptible, perishable. Only after it is judged faithful is it raised in incorruption to immortality. This is the better resurrection (Hebrews 11:35), the rewarding of the faithful servants with life eternal.

The body that comes from the grave is mortal, corruptible, described as in "dishonour," in "weakness," a "natural body." The glorified body to which it will be changed is described as "endued with power," "raised in glory," "a spiritual body" (vs. 43-44, NEB). Paul is contrasting the mortal with the immortal, the natural body familiar to us with the glorified body of one made

equal to the angels. How he must have longed, even yearned for that immortal body to be raised in incorruption, raised in glory, raised in power, raised a spiritual body. And do we not share the same lively expectation?

Natural, Then Spiritual

"Howbeit that was not first which is spiritual, but that which is natural; and afterward that which is spiritual" (v. 46). The natural man is not immortal. We are born, live and die in our mortal state; and when resurrected we are still mortal. Only when judged faithful will we be given the change to the spiritual or immortal body.

"As is the earthy, such are they also that are earthy: and as is the heavenly, such are they also that are heavenly" (v. 48). There is a mortal state, subject to death, of the earth, earthy. There is also an immortal state not subject to death, heavenly. The earthy nature tends downward to the lower, base instincts. It is morally imperfect, subject to temptation. The heavenly must be developed, its interests trained in the upward reach to the things of God. To be heavenly we must learn His ways and thoughts and live on a higher plane.

"And as we have borne the image of the earthy," our mortal, corruptible natures, so "we shall also bear the image of the heavenly" (v. 49). If during our mortal career we devote all our love and interest to pursuing the higher interests, to God and His purposes, if we overcome all evil with good, crucify the flesh with all its affections and lusts, develop a character worthy of receiving the "well done" of the great Judge, then just as certainly as day follows night, so certainly shall we "bear the image of the heavenly," be partakers of what Peter called the "divine nature," our corruptible, mortal bodies changed and made like unto the immortal body of Christ.

Not "Flesh and Blood"

Then follows his conclusive summary statement: "Now this I say, brethren, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God" (v. 50). We must be changed from our mortal state. Physical flesh and blood are extremely corruptible, and God does not intend to allow anything corruptible to become any part of His heavenly Kingdom. Does this mean that glorified beings are spirits, not having real bodies? It does not. Just because immortals are no longer flesh and blood does not mean that they are immaterial nothings.

Immortal bodies are real bodies that have been changed in substance, "fashioned like unto his glorious body [the body of Christ]" (Phil. 3:20-21), of some superior substance that is not subject to death, decay and sickness, something totally beyond our realm of experience. The angels that appeared to men and

**Let us never forget that
coming day of reckoning.
Now is the time for us
to become what we will
want to be then.**

women of old were immortal beings, but they had the appearance of men and were sometimes mistaken for men, as the three who approached Abraham late in the day (Gen. 18:2) to announce the approaching destruction of the cities of the plain. The man Gabriel appeared to Daniel and touched him with a real hand (Dan. 9:21); and "the man of God" appeared to the wife of Manoah (Judges 13:6). All were immortal, but very real beings.

Flesh and blood cannot have part in the Kingdom of God, "neither doth corruption inherit incorruption." There is a physical change involved which only the power of God can perform. Mortals do not automatically become immortal at death, nor can mortal men and women be inheritors of the Kingdom in their mortal state. Paul is simply stating that there must be a physical change.

(Continued Next Page)

READ for Your LIFE!

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

GOD'S SPIRITUAL CREATION

THE KINGDOM OF GOD

THE GREAT APOSTASY

HELL AND THE DEVIL

AFTER DEATH, WHAT?

TRINITY OR UNITY?

THE HOLY SPIRIT

THE ATONEMENT

THE SABBATH

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"We Shall Not All Sleep"

In the verses following, Paul describes this change and the glorious immortal state. "Listen," he says, "I will unfold a mystery"—something not previously discussed or revealed. "We shall not all die, but we shall all be changed" (v. 51, NEB)—a point most meaningful to us, we who are privileged to live at the very end of this age. By saying "we" Paul referred to the whole body of Christ, all the covenant-makers who would prove faithful during their day of salvation; and we of this age, who may be part of that body if we qualify, may not all have to pass through the death state.

What a privilege, if we may be among those to pass right through into the new age and on into Eternity without having to experience physical death. We may not have to sleep, but we must all be changed. All—both the resurrected dead who prove faithful and those among the living who prove faithful—must be changed, transformed from the mortal state to the immortal state; from that which is corruptible, to the incorruptible, as the following verses set forth: "For the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed" (vs. 51-52). Here again we must remember that the words "the dead shall be raised incorruptible" does not refer to the initial bringing forth from the grave, for the dead come forth mortal, as the last phrase of verse 51 clearly implies. "We shall be changed." When Paul speaks of the dead who will be raised "incorruptible," he is referring to the glorious exaltation, the lifting up to the higher plain of immortality, the physical change which will be granted all faithful servants at Judgment Day.

From Corruptible to Incorruptible

The following verse clarifies the point even further: "For this corruptible must put on incorruption; and this mortal must put on immortality." If all were brought forth from the grave immortal and incorruptible, there would be no need to "put on" that state.

Then what is the glorious climax of this good news of resurrection? "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. O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory?" There is no more triumphant statement in all Scripture. Here is the final conquest complete. Death is conquered, its sting forever removed, swallowed up in victory.

Paul was looking forward to this. He believed it with all his heart. He labored for it with all his being. He believed it so thoroughly that he might well have added, "Oh glorious victory." He knew that day would come, and it

was the goal of his life to attain to it. "If by any means," he wrote, "I might attain unto the resurrection of the dead" (Phil. 3:11). Herein lay Paul's hope, and herein lies our own. Even though we may not have to pass through death, we shall still need that glorious exaltation, that change to immortality, that better resurrection to life and glory.

Paul then concludes his resurrection thesis with this earnest, heartfelt plea. It is an exhortation to endure, whatever the cost, because that final "Well done" is sure. "Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye steadfast, unmovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord."

May we let those words live in us through every hour of every coming day, until our triumph is secure, "forasmuch as ye know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord." We can know that it is not in vain. What glorious good news of resurrection!

And Paul spoke it to us, you and me, if we just prove faithful.

MM

My Aim. . .

To live as gently as I can,
To be, no matter where, a man;
To take what comes of good or ill;
To cling to faith and honor still;
To do my best and let it stand
The record of my brain and hand;
And then should failure come to me
Still work and hope for victory.

To have no secret place wherein
I stoop unseen to shame or sin;
To be the same when I'm alone
As when my every deed is known,
To live undaunted, unafraid
Of any step that I have made;
To be without pretense or sham
Exactly what men think I am.

To love not the deceitful word;
Seek honor only from the Lord.
To yield my all to Him whose eye
Records my every thought on high;
To make my record pure and clean
So not a stain of sin is seen;
This is the offering I would bring
To lay before my Judge and King.

—Selected.

— *And Still She Speaks* —

Part Five

The following lines are extracts from sermons, discussions, talks, comments by Rev. Maud Hembree (1853-1935).

If we just allow that word of God to have free course in us and do all to the glory of God, it will do away with all self-justification.

If we allow the Word of God to make deep impressions upon our heart, we will get so we will feel worse for God to know our sins than for any man or woman to know. We naturally think God is a long way off and we are more concerned about what this one and that one knows. But we have to change until we think and feel worse over what God knows. Then we are growing.

(In 1935) Italy has a law that boys from 8 to 33 have to take training; they belong to the state. America is training her boys, training her girls, training in military academies, all training for war. But how wonderful it will be when God trains for Christians in the Thousand years, a great number no man can number! not training for killing, but warring against sin.

I think we have had a wonderful chapter (Matthew 7) if we just take it in, have our minds receptive to its truth, cause it to make such an impression on our lives that will not be effaced.

God never had a plan whereby men and women could do as they pleased. He does not allow us to make this choice if we pretend to serve Him. He gives us this short fleeting life free, and we can use it as we please; but He is not going to perpetuate our existence and give us a life that will never end unless we now conform our lives to His law. If we want to use this life to our own gratification we cannot expect a future reward; but if we agree to serve Him and keep our vows, we will receive the great promised reward.

God's thoughts naturally are not our thoughts, but we have to forget the past and reach forward to the future; then our minds will be receptive to God's thoughts and we will retain them.

Only a heartfelt repentance will avail to our salvation. As I wrote to a brother today, we do not have to be talented to get rid of all the evil. We do not have to have a great education to grasp the things of God; it is he that has a humble and contrite spirit and "trembleth at my word."

We must be like the clay in the hands of the potter, easily molded, so the truth of God can be impressed upon our minds. We need to watch. We like to bend a little to worldly things; we like a little of our own way and own pleasure. But we need to get our minds so softened by truth that we will tremble when we hear the word of God.

If we are rebellious and hard-hearted; if we steel our hearts and close our eyes, God's judgments will come on us and we will reap destruction. These things were written for our learning.

Never have the feeling that you would not speak to some one if they did you an injury. I suppose we have all had some things of that kind in our life; but we cannot carry any feeling over it. We have no room in the new mind for such things as that. We must fill our mind with elevating thoughts, thoughts of purity and virtue. We must crowd out the wrong thoughts by filling the mind with something better. The mind is not filled with God's truth so long as we harbor some bitter feeling or some hurt feeling.

Nothing shall separate us from the love of God, from keeping His commandments, if we leave self behind. We have found by experience that the only weights we ever had were the thoughts and impulses of the natural mind, the miserable emotions of our own lower nature. God's law is easy to live; the only problem is self.

On the Paying of Vows

"When thou vowest a vow unto God, defer not to pay it" (Eccl. 5:4).

AT THIS sacred season of the year, when we renew the memory of our Lord's Passover, that Last Supper with His disciples before He suffered, we are faced also with pledging anew our own sacred commitment to Him and all that He has brought into our lives.

A vow has been defined as a voluntary obligation, an act by which one consecrates or devotes himself to some deed, service, condition, or person. It presupposes that the action be noble or honest or righteous.

For the committed follower of Christ, a vow is all this and more. As professing Christians, our duty to pay what we have vowed springs directly from the contract we have entered into voluntarily. God says, "If you will. . . then I will. . ." to which we reply, "I will"; and so the vow is made. It becomes at once an obligation, a duty—and an opportunity. Besides making us responsible for all we do and have and are, it opens to us the opportunity to share in all that God has and is willing to share with us. It is an obligation of dependence; it is also an obligation of gratitude. His resources are infinite. But all depends upon our fulfilling our part of the contract. We cannot expect Him to do on His part if we do not do on our part.

The Bible gives at least three basic principles that are involved in the fulfillment of vows:

Vows may be positive, negative, or both. They may be on any level of relationship. On the human level, we make vows to ourselves, our parents, our teachers, to one another. On the highest level we make vows to God.

We make vows in various places and under various circumstances. In our mountaintop experiences, like Peter and John on the Mount of Transfiguration; or in the valley of testing and trial, we make our vows. In both we find the test for our integrity, fortitude, and resolution. Even in our low moments we must work out our resolve and make our troubles and depressions steppingstones to the very best that is in us.

Fulfilling our vows means many things, and all are associated with personal integrity. The vows we make in either the low or the high moments of our lives must lead us to keener insights, new frontiers of achievement, and growth that will develop in us the rich purity, deep faith, and high commitment He is seeking. Our vows to God express all our highest ideals and moral values. Indeed, they comprehend the whole of life. There is nothing we can do or say that is not affected by what we have vowed.

The Hebrews did not speak of religion and ethics, as so many students of religion do today. If they did not

have the deeds to exemplify their religious experience, their religion was not true religion but idolatry. Religion and ethics were inseparable. This was the way with all God's prophets. For them, to know was to do; knowing brought the responsibility of doing.

Vows also involve the will. The choices are ours, but once the vow is made, the consequences are inevitable.

Lastly, vows must be fulfilled at the moment of opportunity. They are compulsory. "Defer not to pay it." Once we have vowed, there is no escaping the obligation. There is no deferring without penalty. There is not even any option for procrastinating. Procrastination only invites default.

We have a moral obligation to do what we have promised—the right thing, at the right time, with the right motive and attitude. The Bible is explicit with examples of those who failed because of the lack of one of these in fulfilling their vows to God.

The dignity of discipline cannot be overrated. Our moral fiber can be flabby, or it can be as firm as steel.

Let us be firm and steadfast in the paying of our vows. In the words of the poet:

*Be strong.
We are not here to play, to dream, to drift;
We have hard work to do, and loads to lift.
Shun not the battle; face it. 'Tis God's gift.
Be strong.*

When we fall back on paying our vows to God, the casualty shows first in our own character, then in the lives of those around us as they are influenced by us. How high the obligation we carry in paying our vows to God—for "no man liveth unto himself."

As we renew our vow this Passover season, our vow to live wholly and solely for God and righteousness, to abide by all the demands of the law of liberty, to seek and find all our love and joy in Him, let our hearts overflow with gratitude and praise. Our vow is our opportunity to claim our share of the inheritance of the faithful. It is a somber matter, but also the matter that can bring us the highest joy.

Vows fulfilled bring hope and happiness even now, but the greatest benefits are future when the saints shall come to Zion with "everlasting joy" upon their heads (Isa. 35:10). With such a happy prospect before us, should we not eagerly say with the Psalmist, "I will pay my vows unto the Lord now in the presence of all his people" (Ps. 116:14)?

In reality, who can afford not to!

MM

UNDERSTANDING THE BIBLE

"Study to shew thyself approved unto God."

APOSTASY: Departing from the Faith

THE GREAT apostasy was a subject of prophecy. Through His prophets God foretold that a time would come when there would be no one left who would acknowledge His supremacy, when His Word would be trampled under foot of men.

But the light of true religion did not sink beneath the dark waters of human reasoning all at once. The process was gradual, spanning a period of some seven centuries. As we learned in our previous lessons, the process began even while some of the apostles were still living and teaching.

The Encyclopedia Britannica defines "apostasy" as "A term generally employed to describe a complete renunciation of the Christian faith, or even an exchange of one form of Christianity for another, especially if the motive be unworthy." In our study of the great apostasy, the first definition, "a complete renunciation of the Christian faith," applies. The second definition needs qualifying, for in reality there cannot be "an exchange of one form of Christianity for another," since there is but one Lord, one faith, and one form of true Christianity. When one apostatizes, the exchange is always for *non-Christianity*.

The great apostasy was a turning from true religion to what Paul termed "another gospel," to what Jesus called the "commandments and doctrines of men." This became literally true as the words of Plato, Philo and other philosophers were accepted on a par with Scripture, and dogmas handed down by the church hierarchy were placed alongside the Word of God.

Causes of the apostasy were many. In the early centuries following the time of Christ, individuals often apostatized as a direct result of severe persecution. Some of the Roman Emperors were unbelievably cruel. Christians were looked upon as criminals worthy of death and as such were often maltreated, tortured, imprisoned without cause, or slain. Others renounced their faith openly to save their lives.

The influence of pagan philosophy had much to do with the apostasy. Its subtle influence can be seen in

nearly every doctrine of nominal Christianity today. Such doctrines as the trinity, the immortal soul, a burning hell, and a literal devil all have their roots in philosophy and not in the Bible.

Self-styled teachers within the Church also hastened the advance of the apostasy. Sincere perhaps, but misguided, they advanced theories that proved popular with the multitudes and led many astray.

Any doctrine that made the way to salvation easier was readily accepted; thus each new teacher that arose drew away disciples after him, just as Paul had prophesied.

But there were yet other causes.

D. The Apostasy Hastened by Adversaries

The Christian Church was never without its adversaries—both within and without. Paul the apostle had to deal with Alexander the coppersmith, who "greatly withstood [his] words." At one time Paul reported that all Asia had turned away from him. The apostle John wrote of those that "went out from us, but they were not of us"—in other words, they did not accept the doctrine taught by the apostles.

1. Ammonius. In the centuries that followed the death of the last witnesses of Christ's ministry, the influence of false teachers spread. One of the earliest of these teachers was Ammonius, a teacher in the school of Alexandria in the second century. Being a teacher, he was in a position to influence many through his lectures. One of his better known pupils was Origen, who is recognized today as one of the early "Church Fathers."

According to the historian Moshier, Ammonius sought to include all people, regardless of creed or deed, in one common brotherhood, and to identify this brotherhood with the brotherhood of Christ. His object was to bring about a reconciliation between all the different schools of philosophy, to unite all in a common religion, whether Greeks or barbarians, Christians or heathens. In the judgment of world society, Ammonius may be esteemed; but as a Christian he failed utterly. Of the works left behind by Ammonius and his disciples the

historian says, "It is impossible for them ever to be viewed in any other light than as deplorable monuments of wisdom run mad."

The Roman Emperor Julian defended the teachings of Ammonius—a fact which was in itself enough to condemn Ammonius! The Roman emperor said that the different religious sects were "merely different modes of coming to the truth, and ought to be considered in no other light than as different routes by which men may travel towards the same place. Those who go to Athens," he said, "are by no means restricted to one particular road, but are at liberty to go by sea as well as by land; just so they who are in quest of the truth may pursue different means of arriving at it.... If one charts the course of these sects, he will find them all consistent and tending to the same end." (These words have a familiar ring—not unlike what we hear from some ministers of our own day. But what a contrast to Jesus' teaching, that "strait is the gate, and narrow is the way, which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it"—Matt. 7:14; or "Strive to enter in at the strait gate: for many, I say unto you, will seek to enter in, and shall not be able"—Luke 13:24).

2. Arius—the "Arian Heresy." Arius was another false teacher who arose in the fourth century. The so-called "Arian heresy" did not concern a point of Bible teaching, but only a point of doctrine in an already apostate church. The point of controversy concerned the nature of Christ: Was He God, or was He man? The question excited both clergy and laymen. Constantine, the Roman Emperor at the time, tried to settle the dispute peaceably, but without success. Unable to get the parties to agree, he called the first ecumenical council—which had more to do with what is currently believed by many "Christians" than has the Bible.

According to historian Will Durant, the question "was vital both theologically and politically. If Christ was not God, the whole structure of Christian doctrine (so-called) would begin to crack; and if division were permitted on this question, chaos of belief might destroy the unity and authority of the Church, and therefore its value as an aid to the state. As the controversy spread, Constantine...summoned all bishops to meet at Nicaea in the year 325."

The statement known as the Nicene Creed officially "settled" the matter, but it did not change the true teaching of the Word of God, nor did it end the debate between Arius and his contender, Athanasius.

3. Athanasius, also a bishop and a contemporary of Arius, seemed to delight in controversy. He helped formulate the creed that was accepted by the church at that time, explaining the nature of Christ and defining

the trinity. According to the historian, Athanasius "conceded the difficulty of picturing three distinct persons in one God, but argued that reason must bow to the mystery of the trinity." (What passage in Scripture suggests such a requirement?)

Athanasius was probably the best known of the arguers of the early centuries. For many years he led the opposition against many spokesmen for the apostate church. He enjoyed a sizeable following and a host of friends. With some of the clergy he found favor; by others he was banished. Likewise the emperors. He was persecuted by Constantine but protected by his son. Of him the historian Gibbon writes, "The name of Athanasius will never be separated from the Catholic doctrine of the trinity to whose defense he consecrated every moment and every faculty of his being."

Athanasius also made one other great (?) contribution: It was he who first propounded the theory that the death of Christ was the payment of a debt due to God, a doctrine that led the already apostate church even further from the true gospel of Christ.

These disputes between factions of the church caused no small stir in their day. Although a small number still held to the "faith which was once delivered unto the saints," the majority of the bishops at the Council of Nicaea represented churches already apostate, far removed from the Apostolic Church.

E. The Apostasy Hastened by Emperors

Roman Emperors, who were mostly pagans and opposed to the Christian Church, also helped promote the apostasy, though perhaps unwittingly. The barbaric persecution of Christians which they carried out was, next to philosophy, the greatest single factor in the apostasy.

1. Third century emperors. During the third century, the Emperor Decius issued an order requiring everyone to pay homage to the gods of Rome. Some resisted, but so many complied that the bishop of Alexandria was caused to write that "the apostasy was almost universal."

A few years later, the Emperor Valerian carried on another reign of terror against the Christians, demanding that all conform to the Roman ceremonials and forbidding any Christian assembly. Those who resisted the order were subjected to the most cruel treatment imaginable; many were put to death.

Following Valerian in the third century, the scene was more peaceful. There was little persecution, but it was not a period of Christian growth into holiness. Of this period the historian Durant writes, "The church made rich converts, built costly cathedrals, and

allowed its members to share in the joys of this world. Christians intermingled more freely with pagans and married them....The church became the richest religious organization in the Empire—but it was not any longer the true Church.

“Cyprian (a 3d century bishop) complained that his parishioners were mad about money, that Christian women painted their faces, that bishops held lucrative offices of state, made fortunes and denied their faith at the first sign of danger. Eusebius mourned that priests quarreled violently in their competition for ecclesiastical preferment. While Christianity converted the world, the world converted Christianity, and displayed the natural paganism of mankind” (Will Durant, *Caesar and Christ*, p. 657).

The church had gone a long way down the road toward apostasy, but the darkness was still penetrated by a few rays of light. The historian, although unaware of the Biblical prophesy of the apostasy, recognized a remnant holding to the true faith. Of them he writes: “A minority wished to avoid any indulgence of human appetite, and to continue the early Christian absorption in thoughts of eternal life.” Praise God for the faith, zeal, endurance and courage of these faithful few!

2. Fourth century emperors. At the beginning of the fourth century, Christians again came under attack from the emperor when Diocletian “decreed the destruction of all Christian churches, the burning of Christian books, the dissolution of Christian congregations, the confiscation of their property, the exclusions of Christians from public office, and the punishment of death for Christians detected in religious assembly. A band of soldiers inaugurated the persecution by burning to the ground the cathedral at Nicomedia.”

Constantine, who followed Diocletian early in the fourth century, was an exception to the cruel rulers who had preceded him. Embracing the now apostate Christian faith (outwardly, at least), he made it the religion of the Empire. Persecutions ceased and Christians were accepted as desirable citizens, free to practice their worship as they chose.

Constantine's Christianity and that of his empire was not the Christianity of Jesus and His apostles. It was Christian in name only—Christianity as espoused by Constantine was a mixture of much paganism and philosophy with a very small part of the teachings of Christ. But true Christians benefited even so. Many who had been forced into hiding under previous Emperors were now free to come into the light; however, their numbers were sadly diminished.

The historian casts some doubt on Constantine's sincerity in embracing the Christian faith. “Was his conversion sincere?” asks Durant. “Was his conversion

an act of religious belief, or a consummate stroke of political wisdom? Probably the latter....A real believer would have been a Christian first and a statesman afterward; with Constantine it was the reverse. Christianity was to him a means, not an end.”

III. DARKNESS COVERS THE EARTH

“For behold, darkness shall cover the earth, and gross darkness the people,” wrote the prophet Isaiah.

History recognizes the period between the fourth and fifteenth centuries as an age of darkness, both mental and moral. It was a time of “extreme disorder, insecurity and violence”; a time when “people welcomed, and for the most part generated, a hundred thousand tales of supernatural events, powers and cures,” according to the historian Durant.

This period is called the Medieval Age, also appropriately the “Dark Ages.” In the realm of religion, it was truly an age of darkness. The light of true religion was gradually going out; the doctrine of the Scriptures was rapidly being replaced by the error being handed out as “truth” by the apostate church.

In the earlier centuries, the church had sought to overcome paganism, to convert the pagans to Christianity. The historian describes Augustine's argument against paganism as the “last rebuttal in the greatest of historic debates.” But paganism won; the end result was that paganism overcame the church—and in a manner that could have been foreknown only by Divine wisdom. Paganism was popular. The church, being unable to thwart it, adopted it. The historian Durant describes how paganism was “Christianized”:

“Paganism survived in the moral sense, as a joyous indulgence of natural appetites; as a religion it remained only in the form of ancient rites and customs condoned, or accepted and transformed, by an often indulgent church. An intimate and trustful worship of saints replaced the cult of the pagan gods,...Statues of Isis and Horus were renamed Mary and Jesus;...the Saturnalia were replaced by Christmas celebrations, the Floralia by Pentecost, an ancient festival of the dead by All Souls' Day [which later became what we know as Halloween], the resurrection of Attis [a pagan god] by the resurrection of Christ. Pagan altars were rededicated to Christian heroes; incense, lights, flowers, processions, vestments, hymns, which had pleased the people in older cults were domesticated and cleansed [supposedly] in the ritual of the church; and the slaughter of a living victim was sublimated in the spiritual sacrifice of the Mass.”

“The church wisely [?] accepted the popular theology. She resisted, then used, then abused, the cult of martyrs and relics. She opposed the worship of images

and icons, and warned her faithful that these should be revered only as symbols, but public feeling overcame these cautions" (Will Durant, *The Age of Faith*, p. 75).

Durant further describes how "people and priests used the sign of the cross as a magic incantation to expel or drive away demons," and how "exorcisms were pronounced over the candidate for baptism," how "dream cures" once available only in pagan temples could be obtained in Roman sanctuaries and at a hundred or more shrines. "It was not the priests who corrupted the people in such matters," writes Durant, "but the people who persuaded the priests."

Paganism had triumphed; the darkness had deepened. Total apostasy was not far off.

A. Fathers of Darkness

As a nation's leaders, so its people. Just so in the church. Apostate leaders beget apostate people. When the young Christian Church had been headed by such faithful apostles as Peter, Paul, John and James, or by brethren like Stephen, Barnabas and Timothy, pure doctrine was the rule of faith. But when the church was headed by men who expounded their own ideas, and who were themselves devotees of philosophy, truth soon disappeared; the vain thoughts of men replaced the commandments of the Master and religion became more superstition than Scripture.

In the fourth century, the Catholic Church had not yet reached its zenith. "Papal infallibility" had not yet come into being; bishops of the principal cities held sway over the churches—often with widely varying points of view on doctrine.

Much of the writings of the bishops of this time have survived, but of them none are better known than those of Augustine.

1. Augustine. When Augustine came upon the scene, the church was already a long way down the road toward apostasy, but probably no one of the early church "fathers" (so-called) did more to hasten the church into total apostasy than he. So indelible were the imprints he left upon the doctrines of the Catholic church that they can be seen today in the catechisms of the mother church and all her daughters.

Augustine was born of a Christian mother and began life with her simple faith. But while he was away at school, he proudly abandoned his mother's faith and led a life that was anything but exemplary, sadly lacking in Christian morals. When he was thirty, he again embraced the Christian faith of the now apostate Church. Soon after his conversion he entered a monastery (which he founded) and there began his career of studying and writing. Ten years later he was

named bishop of the North African church, where he spent the remaining 35 years of his life.

Like so many other theologians, Augustine was not content to accept the teachings of Scripture as given by the prophets, apostles and Jesus, and in expounding them adapted them to his own vain reasoning. In treatise after treatise he labored to reconcile with reason such doctrines of the apostate church as original sin, salvation through Christ's suffering, predestination, imputed righteousness, the sinlessness of Mary and many more. Fifteen years he devoted to his best known work—on the subject of the trinity—writing many volumes, "struggling to find analogies in human experience for three persons in one God."

Augustine's fertile mind produced more volumes of error than anyone else of his time, and when he died in 430 A.D. he left the church more apostate than he had found it.

2. Papal Imperialism. Not many years after Augustine, the question of one imperial head of the Catholic Church arose. Until this time, the bishops of the principal cities had enjoyed equal authority over their respective districts. About the year 445, Pope Leo I of Rome justified his claim to supremacy by quoting "Thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church," and formally declared himself supreme over all bishops of the West. The action was based on what one historian calls "two vague traditions": 1) that Peter had been the first bishop of Rome, 2) that Christ had given to Peter official primacy over the other apostles, and that this primacy had been transmitted to all succeeding bishops of the imperial city Rome.

The bishop of Constantinople, however, was not willing to yield to Rome, and a long struggle ensued between the two rival heads of the church.

Some years later, Nicholas I built upon "the then accepted premise that the Son of God had founded the Church by making Peter her first head,...and concluded that the pope, as God's representative on earth, should enjoy authority over all Christians—rulers as well as subjects—at least in matters of faith and morals," writes Durant. "He eloquently expounded his simple argument, and no one in Latin Christendom dared contradict it."

The action was only one more step in the direction of total apostasy. Papal supremacy was conceived in the minds of men, not in the Holy Scriptures. There is nothing in the Bible to indicate that Peter was bishop of Rome at any time or that he was granted supremacy over all other bishops of his time. He identifies himself simply as "a servant and an apostle of the Lord Jesus Christ"—not as bishop of the church of Rome.

(To be continued next issue)

I'm Sorry, I Was Wrong

WHAT THREE little words are the hardest to say? What three little words, if spoken in the home or place of employment, would make ever so much more happiness for all?

They are these: "I am sorry." Just three little words, but how often have we failed to use them when we have spoken the sharp or impatient or unkind word. Even a slightly indifferent attitude when someone needed an understanding friend to help them over life's rough places should have brought to our lips, "I'm sorry, I was wrong." And how much better would our day have ended if we had not been so thoughtless about the light or careless words we dropped, or that phrase tinged with bitterness—which we can be sure did nothing to encourage spiritual growth.

How much bickering and strife could be avoided if, when a disagreement arises, we would take a good long look at ourselves and instead of putting the blame on the other person we would humbly take our proper share of the blame, let the other person know we recognize our failure, and honestly admit, "I'm sorry, I was wrong."

When foolish pride governs us; or—to our shame—our temper flies; or that green-eyed monster jealousy turns our life into a sea of misery and we become cold and aloof and say things to our friends which we would never have said when clothed with the mind of Christ—at all such times we need to learn quickly to make amends and be anxious to admit, "I'm sorry, I was wrong, very wrong." What do we gain by holding back? Nothing at all.

Just three little words, "I am sorry," but they are as oil upon the troubled waters. What divine power they hold to bless the wounded spirit, to heal the rift caused by an unkindness, or to take the sting out of cold indifference.

The command of God is that we be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment. We are to walk in newness of life, to conform our lives to the image of Christ, to follow His example in everything we do. However, this is not the achievement of a moment. It takes time, and much of that time must be spent in learning to bear and forbear with our fellow man.

When a disagreement arises in a family, who is right and who is wrong? Very often the answer is nebulous. But there is one question that we can answer: Who is greater? The answer is usually the person who is willing to say, "I am sorry," and mean it. Apologizing is a virtue. It is not a weakness but a sign of strength. Small people never apolo-

gize; they imagine themselves always right. The person who knows everything has a lot to learn.

Big people, Christ-like people, want to apologize so that they can leave their sins behind and become more and more like their Master.

We can be great in our family relationships by learning to apologize. In the same manner we can become great in God's family.

How can we master these three words? Here are a few suggestions:

Always take the initiative in apologizing.

At the end of the day, stop to count how many times you should have apologized and did not. Think of everything you can: the raised voice, the hasty judgment, the lack of consideration, the overcritical spirit, the act of selfishness, and so many other things that only you can enumerate.

When you apologize, don't try to rationalize or throw responsibility on someone else or on circumstances.

Remember what Christ said: Do not wait for your brother who has something against you to come to you; go to him to make amends (Matt. 5:23-25).

A mature Christian is marked by his willingness to admit his wrongdoing, and then to ask God and others to forgive him. This is the theme of a thoughtful poem, entitled "I'm Sorry, I Was Wrong."

*There may be virtue in the man
Who's always sure he's right,
Who'll never hear another's plan
And seeks no further light.
But I like more the chap who sings
A very different song,
Who says when he has messed up things,
"I'm sorry, I was wrong."*

*It's hard for anyone to say
That failure's due to him,
That he has lost the fight or way
Because his light burned dim.
It takes a man to cast aside
The vanity that's strong,
Confessing, "Twas my fault, I lied,
I'm sorry, I was wrong."*

*Confess your faults, the Bible says;
That humble act makes strong;
You'll honor God and rest your soul
By saying, "I was wrong."*

Humble frankness and honest self-examination is not only good therapy for the soul but it also opens the door to renewed relationships. Others are more likely to show compassion and be forgiving if you acknowledge your faults and are willing to say, "I'm sorry, I was wrong."

Creationism On Trial

IN VIEW of the evidence all around us, it seems strange that any thinking person would object to a law requiring that public schools teach God as the Creator alongside the teaching of evolution as the cause of the existence of our world and all things in it. But when the law passed only last year in the state of Arkansas was challenged in court, the verdict was rendered in favor of the evolutionists, and the law was declared unconstitutional.

The Darwin theory of evolution leaves so much to be desired from either a scientific, biological, rational or religious standpoint that one wonders about the validity of other subjects which are considered worth teaching in our schools. If the theory of evolution can be taught to our children, what can possibly be the criteria used in deciding what should be taught? In his majority opinion in the recent court ruling, Judge William Overton wrote the following: "...Creationism is not science, because it seeks evidence to support the Scriptures rather than testing opposing ideas. A theory that is by its own terms dogmatic, absolutist and never subject to revision is not a scientific theory."

According to that statement, any pronouncement by scientists, astronomers, biologists, geologists, etc., must be subject to continual revision if the theory is to be classified as scientific. Where does that leave the scholar? Is all knowledge subject to constant revision? Is there nothing we can teach the young that is factual and absolute?

Yet our world is full of facts which are absolute. Certain metals expand when heated and contract when cooled. If we state this as a fact, are we being unscientific? Water freezes at 32 degrees Fahrenheit, unless another substance is added to it. This is taught in the textbooks as a fact. Does that make it unscientific?

Our ideas of a subject may change, but there are facts underlying a subject that do not change, whatever may be popularly believed. For instance: at one period of history, primitive people thought that the stars were lanterns which were hung in the sky at sundown and taken in at sunrise. The Babylonians believed that the world consisted of a disk-shaped earth surrounded by a moat of sea beyond which the inverted bowl of the sky

came down all around. The theory that the earth was the center of the universe was widely held at least until the time of Copernicus in 1500. The latest issue of *The Atlas of the World* published by the National Geographic Society has this to say about our earth:

"Viewed in cosmic perspective, our beautiful earth is but a galactic afterthought, an insignificant mote of dust in the starlight. Its mass is three millionths that of the sun, itself one of the lesser among the billion galaxies within the reach of the greatest telescopes." If we were to apply literally Judge Overton's theory of proper scientific teaching, we should prefer the theories of the Babylonians and Copernicus to those of our modern scientists, for they would be more certain to be subjected to revision and change!

When we consider the changing character of what man calls "scientific" knowledge, can we wonder that the apostle Paul wrote: "The wisdom of this world is foolishness with God" (I Cor. 3:19)?

But because man's concept of the universe and the subject of astronomy keep advancing does not mean that there are no absolute facts underlying the laws of the universe. Man may not know all the laws that govern the universe, but that does not mean those laws do not exist or that they can never be learned; or that if they should be revealed by the Creator of those laws they must still be considered subject to "change and revision." Man's knowledge of the universe has advanced tremendously in the last twenty years. Students of astronomy twenty years ago must of necessity re-think many concepts learned at that time. But the basic, underlying laws of the universe, whether known or unknown, remain the same. It is only man's understanding of those laws that has changed, not the laws themselves.

Would it not be a distinct advantage to teach a subject, the basis of which is unquestionable? This cannot be done with the subject of evolution, for it raises more questions than it answers. At the trial in Little Rock, one of the strongest witnesses for the law came from a Buddhist astrophysicist, N. C. Wickramasinghe, who said that Darwinism is about as plausible as "a tornado blowing through a junk yard and assembling a 747 Jet Airliner."

So overwhelming is the evidence that the earth and all living things on it were created by an Omnipotent Creator that mortal man should be only too willing to acknowledge the fact. Teaching it to the young should be the moral duty as well as mandated by law. Teaching respect for the Great Creator should go far toward giving the young a balanced viewpoint on life.

Bible teaching on this point is unquestionable. The inspired Biblical writers all agreed as to who created the heavens and the earth.

Nehemiah: "Thou even thou art Lord alone; thou hast made heaven, the heaven of heavens, with all their host, the earth, and all things that are therein, the seas, and all that is therein, and thou preservest them all; and the host of heaven worshippeth thee" (Neh. 9:6).

Job: "But ask now the beasts, and they shall teach thee; and the fowls of the air, and they shall tell thee: or speak to the earth, and it shall teach thee: and the fishes of the sea shall declare unto thee. Who knoweth not in all these that the hand of the Lord hath wrought this?" (Job 12:7-9).

David: "By the word of the Lord were the heavens made; and all the host of them by the breath of his mouth" (Ps. 33:6).

Isaiah: "Thus saith the Lord, thy redeemer, and he that formed thee from the womb, I am the Lord that maketh all things; that stretcheth forth the heavens alone; that spreadeth abroad the earth by myself" (Isa. 44:24).

While the Bible is without doubt our best source of information as to who created the literal heavens and earth, the Bible does not inform us as to when or how they were created. This is something known only to God.

While we know very little detail of the testimony at the trial in Little Rock, it would seem from press reports that the creationists were using for their basis of evidence their view of the creation account in Genesis, saying that the earth and man were created in six literal days about 6000 years ago. This is a fatal mistake and one which cannot be supported either scientifically or Biblically.

Our church believes that the account in Genesis, while showing that God is the Creator and that the literal earth and the heavens are His creative handiwork, does not tell how or when He did this. The whole passage is so much more understandable and reasonable when taken as an allegory of God's plan of salvation on this earth through its entire period of development. A literal interpretation of the first of Genesis has been the source of long conflict between science and religion for centuries, and it is a conflict which should never have existed. There is no conflict between the Bible properly understood and true science. Why should there be, when the Editor-in-Chief of the Bible is the Creator of all the laws of science?

It is unfortunate that many times the Bible's most vocal and well-meaning supporters are its worst enemies. To

hold dogmatically to many doctrines taught by many theologians today, to interpret literally what the Biblical writers intended in a figurative sense, to give meanings to words which were never intended by the original writers, all does great disservice to the Book. It destroys faith in God and His Word and leaves both young and old on a sea without chart and compass.

Our founder, Rev. L. T. Nichols, made the following statement over seventy years ago, and we believe that it is just as true today:

"We take the position that the Bible is as up-to-date, as reasonable, as accurate, as open to analysis as any earthly science. We hold that, as originally written, it contains not a single contradiction, absurdity, impossibility or error; that it agrees with nature and all true science. We assert that it goes even further and reveals in itself and by an honest comparison with history that it is of Divine origin. Nothing less than this position can satisfy the seeker for a life beyond this transitory career."

While we feel certain that our founder's position would not have been upheld by the Arkansas court either, we do regret the weak foundation of those who fought so valiantly in the defense of the Scriptures. If only they could have been armed with the armour of the Word of God!

When we consider that the material from which everything that we can see, feel, hear, and use cannot be created by man, should we not feel a great respect for the Great Creator of all and give Him our humble acknowledgment?

MM

Thirty-Three Years

How young He was, how short His time on earth!
A pulse-beat through the centuries, a breath
Between the starlit hour of His birth
And that strange, darkened hour of death.
Yet had those years not gone their swift sure way,
Had their significance been lost to men,
There would be darkness in the land today,
No faith would lift, no heart could hope again.

Thank God, thank God for those years' precious store!
Thank God for sparing Him to you, to me,
"Out of the glory that was theirs before
The world was..." and the glory yet to be.
The darkened years for Him, that brought us light;
The weary years for Him, that gave us rest;
The clamorous years, that we might know those white
High silences of peace within the breast.

For thirty-three brief years that His feet trod
The earthly roads for us, we thank Thee, God.—Sel.

Persistent Prayer

"Which of you shall have a friend, and shall go unto him at midnight, and say to him, Friend, lend me three loaves; for a friend of mine is come to me from a journey, and I have nothing to set before him; and he from within shall answer and say, Trouble me not; the door is now shut, and my children are with me in bed; I cannot rise and give thee? I say unto you, though he will not rise and give him because he is his friend, yet because of his importunity he will arise and give him as many as he needeth" (Luke 11:5-9).

THESE WORDS of Jesus' teach us the value of persistent prayer. But lest they should be misunderstood, Jesus added further, "And I say unto you, Ask, and it shall be given unto you, seek and ye shall find, knock, and it shall be opened unto you."

A certain Canaanite woman from the region of Tyre and Sidon had not heard these words, but her great need taught her to persist in asking till she received her request, in spite of the apparent indifference of Jesus to her petition.

Jesus had left Galilee with His disciples and had gone northward into the neighborhood of Tyre and Sidon. A Canaanite woman who lived in that vicinity came to Him and addressing Him as the Son of David besought Him to heal her daughter. When Jesus answered not a word, she continued to "cry after Him." So persistently did she cry that the disciples besought Jesus to send her away. Did she hear His answer to them, that He was not sent but unto the lost sheep of the house of Israel? She did not belong to that house, but she fell down before Jesus saying, "Lord, help me."

"It is not fitting to take the bread from the children and cast it to the dogs," said Jesus.

"No," she said eagerly in reply, "but the dogs eat the crumbs which fall from their master's table, and I a Gentile may rightfully have what will be no loss to the children, the lost sheep of Israel." By these words she showed her true longing—for words of life and help which only Jesus could give her. Then came the answer to her petition, coupled with these words of praise: "O woman, great is thy faith; be it as you wish." And her daughter was healed from that hour.

She had knocked—insistently—and it had been opened unto her. We need to learn this persistence, this spirit that will not rest until it is satisfied with the fulness of God. We need to learn to entreat God unceasingly, to be persistent in our prayers.

This was the spirit of the apostle Paul. "God is my witness, whom I serve in my spirit in the gospel of His Son, how unceasingly I make mention of you, always in my prayers," he wrote to the brethren at Rome. The apostle Paul resembled his Lord in his reliance on persistent prayer. He prayed without ceasing for the churches as a whole and for those individuals whom he was convinced were laboring earnestly in the Lord. Never did he undertake a missionary journey without prayer for guidance. He prayed wherever he happened to be—in the temple, on the beach, by the riverside, on ship, on the Roman Highway.

How many victories gained by persistent prayer are recorded in the Bible? Let us think about a few.

We are taken to the plains of Mamre, and hear Abraham pleading with God for Sodom; then to the fords of Peniel where we see Jacob wrestling all night with the angel; then on to the Mount Sinai, where we listen as Moses intercedes for his people, praying that God in his mercy grant them another chance. We go to the land of Ur and hear Job's heroic contest with God. We tarry with Jesus in the Garden of Gethsemane, where we see His intense struggle and hear His timeless words of surrender to the will of His Father: "Not my will but thine be done."

Prayer is not really a power until it is importunate. And it cannot be importunate unless we believe that it can have real effect on the will of God.

Far less of the present disbelief in prayer is due to the scientific view of nature than to the kind of prayer that is commonly voiced in public worship. Genuine, persistent prayer is not imposing our egoist will on God, and treating Him as a mysterious but manageable power we may coerce and exploit. It is not passionate dictation or stormy pertinacity.

Genuine prayer is the heart speaking with the language of heaven and feeling with the pulsebeat of heaven. It is our mind in tune with God, our will, our thoughts, our desires, and our passions all His.

How regretful that prayer with us is sometimes without persistence or passionate desire. Was it not thus to the holy men and women in Scripture? Those who prayed earnestly, persistently, wholehearted and whole souled. How often we pray, and pray, and no answer comes. The boon does not arrive. Why? Is it because of our lack of concern, our lack of sincere desire? Or perhaps we are earnest but we are not spiritually ready for it. It would not be a real blessing if it did arrive. In either case, if we persist, if we have the importunity of faith, it will have a great effect on our spiritual nature. It will ripen us, and the time will come when we are ready for the answer. When we present ourselves to God in the right spiritual condition, God will hear, and will answer according to His will. And we in our new spiritual state shall be ready for the answer. Our new attitude is not the answer to our prayer, but it is the condition which makes the communication possible. It makes prayer effectual.

God's object with us is not to give so many things and withhold so many, but it is to remake us into the one new man. To do this He often resists us in our wants. He even wills things for us to resist, to grapple with. Do we

ourselves not appoint problems and make difficulties for those we love and teach, for the very purpose of their overcoming them? We set questions to our children of which we know the answer quite well. The real answer to our will and purpose is not the solution but the grappling, the wrestling, and we may properly give a reward for the hard and honest work. Does not God seek to train us in the same way? He wants us to persist, to grapple, to struggle, but it is all for our good. Obedience is the chief end, and our antagonists are our helpers.

Our characters are only in the making! A certain writer makes two of his characters say the following words: "Oh, I would to God I had never been made," to which the other replies, "Why, my dear child, you are *not* made yet; you are only *being* made, and you are quarrelling with God's processes!"

The poet Browning also has a good thought: "I count life just a stuff/To try the soul's strength on." This is the purpose for which God has given us life. What a suitable reason to obey the injunction given by the apostle Paul: "Be strictly careful, then, about the life you lead. Act like sensible men, not like thoughtless. Make the very most of your time."

MM

Our Duty: "Communicate"

HOW TRUE that "any exchange of the words of life is a mutual benefit to the sender and to the receiver." Each time we communicate one to another our faith in God grows stronger and stronger, also our determination to become a broader exemplification of righteousness in the midst of a world full of skepticism, immorality and belligerence.

Pertaining to our obligations as Christians the writer of Hebrews said, "But to do good and to communicate forget not: for with such sacrifices God is well pleased" (13:16). Surely God realized the significance of spiritual communication one to another in all ages, otherwise it would not have been advised in the Epistle to the Hebrews. And we living down here in these last and appallingly wicked days, just before Jesus returns, should realize just how strengthening communication

can be. Therefore, it is very important that we, as recipients of the Word, communicate one to another.

"While we are working for our daily bread, we must the meanwhile be getting our daily ration from the manna from heaven." And I am happy to say that I am getting much heavenly manna through listening to the wonderful cassette tapes. I have quite a few tapes now, and enjoy them very much. Thanks to the people of God whose untiring efforts have made them possible to us who are scattered abroad!

I must be further preparing myself for the coming of the great future Judge, who will judge us according to our works, whether they be good or evil. So in order for my works to be found good then, they must be good now. For God says in Rev. 22:11, "He that is unjust, let him be unjust still: and he which is filthy, let him be filthy still: and he that is righteous, let him be righteous still: and he that is holy, let him be holy still."

Praise be to God, we now have hope of sharing in that better life beyond the grave. But we, as recipients, must realize that hope alone can never save us, we must have good works as well, for we read in James 2:20, "But wilt thou know, O vain man, that faith without works is dead?" So knowing how vital good works are toward our eternal salvation, let us work while it is still called today, for "Maranatha."

—Contributed

Meditating on the Word



WHY DISQUIETED?

**"Why art thou cast down, O my soul? and why art thou disquieted within me?
hope in God: for I shall yet praise him, who is the health of my countenance,
and my God" (Ps. 43:5)**

HOW OFTEN have we, like the sweet Psalmist of Israel, asked ourselves this same question: "Why art thou cast down, O my soul? and why art thou disquieted within me?" What is the meaning of the restless uneasiness within? For some undefinable reason the sun just doesn't seem to shine so brightly, the sparkle in the eye becomes dull and the step lacks its usual spring. Even prayer seems of no benefit or comfort. Yes, something is wrong. What is it?

We are all well acquainted with the problems and vexations of everyday living. Yes, we recognize these as the opportunities we need to bring our mountaintop resolves to glorious reality. But in all honesty we have to admit that there are days when there are just too many of these "opportunities." Well-laid plans go awry, the car won't start, an appointment runs late, the washing machine breaks down, someone we work with tries our patience, or doesn't appreciate our efforts, or criticizes us for something, and—we could go on and on with the innumerable annoyances that grieve us. Disquieting situations? Most assuredly they are. But why? Why should they contribute so largely to our disquiet and unrest?

More than likely, the reason lies deep within the springs of our own behavior. Yes, if we will survey candidly and honestly the complexities of our own hearts, we will be astonished by the wide variety of disquieting factors that lurk there.

Consider, if you will, the variety of human frustrations, character weaknesses, distressing thought patterns and fears which periodically beat with force upon the door of our minds, causing inner turmoil and disquiet.

Have you ever been afflicted with an inferiority com-

plex? If you have, you know firsthand what a numbing and disquieting experience it can be. You are also well aware that the havoc wreaked can be almost incalculable. Giving way to an inferiority complex is the steppingstone to even more damaging thoughts of worthlessness and self-incrimination. We assure ourselves that we can't do right, no matter how hard we try, that we are misunderstood, mistreated, misjudged, mismatched, mismanaged, and....and....As a result, faith in ourselves and our possibilities sink to new lows and we grovel in the quicksand of self-pity.

"Why art thou disquieted?" Perhaps it is because we are the possessor of an overly sensitive, easily hurt nature. Someone makes a comment and we misinterpret. Consequently our sensitive nature works overtime—in the wrong direction—and hurt feelings creep into our minds. These feelings fester and boil, eventually resulting in bitter and vengeful thoughts which completely destroy our peace of mind and make life miserable. How is it possible to make a huge mountain out of an insignificant molehill? Very, very simple. Just let the hurt feeling go around, and around, and around in your mind, adding a little more hurt with each round, and raising the temperature with each additional rub. Wouldn't it be far better to clear up the misunderstanding at the onset than to allow it to grow and grow like a snowball rolling downhill that becomes larger with every revolution?

Does it seem that we enjoy being miserable and unhappy?

Worry is another factor to be reckoned with, and one which can contribute much to human disquiet. Now we all know a certain degree of concern must be exercised or ours would indeed be an extremely haphazard

existence. But there is a point where concern becomes debilitating worry. Remember, worry won't make it stop storming, worry won't keep the furnace from failing on a bitter cold winter night, and worry will never be successful in making our aches or pains go away. Neither will worry help us meet the many demands of life, or make the decisions necessary as we face the sometimes harsh realities of daily living. No indeed, the only things worry will accomplish are to cripple and completely demoralize the individual caught in its power and influence.

"Why art thou disquieted?" Perchance our peace is disturbed by the prick of a guilty conscience. Could it be that we are distressed by an awareness that we are still all too frequently allowing ourselves freedom to indulge in things we know are strictly forbidden? What of those secret sins known only to ourselves and our heavenly Father? We attempt to convince ourselves that He will understand, while in our hearts we know better; yet the days and the weeks come and go, finding us yielding to the same sin over and over again.

Then there is the uneasiness which is a direct result of mismanaging our free time. We know we should be using our time to God's glory, but all too often it becomes a "me first" situation, with better things taking second or even third place. Is it any wonder we are besieged by a feeling of disquiet?

"Why art thou cast down, O my soul? And why art thou disquieted within me?" Could it be that we have allowed that insidious troublemaker, discouragement, to take up residence once again in our hearts? Have we not yet learned by sad experience the destructive force it is capable of bringing to bear upon us? True, we have committed ourselves to a lifetime task of gigantic proportions, but does that furnish us any plausible excuse for sitting down in the dust just because we occasionally fall short of our goals? No one can leap into perfection; no indeed! It is not the work of a moment; rather, it is the result of slow, persistent, non-wavering diligence in displacing evil with good, whether it be in thought, word or action.

Oh, disquieted soul, waste no more valuable time grieving over past failures; rather, use that failure as the pivot point to higher and yet higher levels of holiness.

Do you think for one minute that King David yielded to the many difficult and disquieting times he encountered during his stormy lifetime? I tell you, No! He learned by painful experience to recognize the dangers and found a way to deal effectively with them. What was the source of his help and ultimate success? Listen to his encouraging advice: "Trust in God. I shall again praise Him for His wondrous help: He will make me smile again for He is my God."

There in a nutshell we have the absolute, unailing

answer to successful Christian living. We need not face disturbing problems in our own puny strength when we are only a heartfelt prayer away from the Infinite. At the throne of grace we can find direction, stability and strength for every experience of our lives. With God beside us, nothing is impossible, no goal too difficult to reach, no disquieting influence too strong for us to conquer.

Let us determine anew to avail ourselves of the assistance so freely offered. Remember, with God's help and guidance in life's disquieting times, we too can "smile again" and go forward to the exhilarating heights of perfection.

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Inquiries and Answers

• Jesus Was Worshiped, therefore Jesus Is God?

"Joshua was confronted one day with a man with his sword drawn. When he asked, 'Art thou for us or for our adversaries?' the reply was, 'Nay, but as captain of the host of the Lord am I now come' (Josh. 5:13-14). Joshua worshiped this person. Who was He? He wasn't an angel, as angels refuse worship (Rev. 19:1-10). He wasn't the Father, for no one has ever seen Him. Yet He was One eligible to be worshiped. He was none other than Jesus, who is the second person of the godhead and thus can receive worship."

Your evidence that Jesus was present and appeared to Joshua seems no more than circumstantial. Who was the man who appeared to Joshua? The passage clearly says that he was a man. And this description permits the possibility that it was an angel, for many times in Scripture angels were identified as men (see Gen. 18:2; 32:24; Acts 1:10).

Recorded in the gospel of John are Jesus' final words to His disciples before the crucifixion. Among other things He speaks of the power that He would be sending and of what it would do for them; of His coming ascension to heaven; also of the fact that they would not be able to accompany Him to heaven. He then tells them, "In that day ye shall ask me nothing. Verily, verily I say unto you, Whatsoever ye shall ask the Father in my name, he will give it you. Hitherto have ye asked nothing in my name: ask, and ye shall receive, that your joy may be full" (John 16:23).

Your conclusion that Jesus must be God because Jesus accepted worship and angels do not is without adequate foundation. Joshua worshiped the angel—"Joshua fell on his face to the earth, and did worship." The original Hebrew word translated "worship" in this passage is *shachah*, and is defined as "prostrate (especially reflexive in homage to royalty or God):—bow down, crouch, fall down, humbly beseech, do obeisance, do reverence, worship," according to Strong's Exhaustive Concordance. Many times in Scripture the word is used when a man bows to another man, a king, or a friend (see

Gen. 23:7, 12; 48:12; 50:18; Ruth 2:10; I Sam. 24:8; 25:23; I Chron. 21:21, where the same word translated "worship" is used.) It was only natural that Joshua should bow or fall prostrate before this messenger of God as a gesture of humility and submission, just as a subject might bow before a king. Angels would be more worthy of such recognition than an earthly monarch.

Joshua's heavenly visitant was an angel—we can see no reason for rejecting this possibility; most certainly the visitor was not the pre-existent Christ whose birth Jacob had foretold.

Furthermore, there is no proof that John's angelic informer in Revelation 19:10 was giving a directive for all time regarding worship.

• If Christ Was Not God

"If Jesus Christ was not God in the flesh, or equal with God, why did He allow men to worship Him?"

In Matthew 1:23, we read the words of the angel: "Behold, a virgin shall be with child, and shall bring forth a son, and they shall call his name Emmanuel, which being interpreted is, God with us." Jesus was born to be a king, the king of this whole earth; and filling such a position, He will certainly be worthy of worship. Christ is to be "God with us"; God has committed the destiny of the earth into His hands, and can we not look up to Christ reverently, in view of the glory God has given Him?

The concept of "God with us" is very different from the generally accepted idea of the "trinity"; i. e., "God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit" (this is not a quotation from Scripture), as co-existent and co-eternal beings, one, yet three. No, God the Father is the eternal God over the whole creation. He is from everlasting to everlasting (Ps. 90:2). Christ is the Son of God, Emmanuel, "God with us" (Matt. 1:23); the earth will be His everlasting domain. He will have charge over all. He is the "firstfruits from the dead," the first to receive immortality (I Cor. 15:23; I Tim. 6:16). "Now we see not yet all things put under him" (Heb. 2:8).

But when Christ returns to earth and conquers the

nations, He will be the supreme ruler—but only of the earth. He will never be the supreme ruler of the whole creation.

We might use the following analogy: If the President of our nation had a son named George, who was president of General Motors, both father and son would be presidents. The father would be president over the whole United States, George would be president of General Motors. To an employee of General Motors, George would be “president” and would be so addressed. But that in no way would make George the president of the United States. His father would be the President of the United States, and George would be subject to his father. The same relationship exists between Christ and God: the Father in overall charge of the universes, the Son in charge of this earth, to be “Emmanuel, which being interpreted is, God with us.”

Therefore we see nothing strange about Christ allowing men to worship Him or bow down to Him—indeed, all nations shall “bow before him” when He is crowned (see Psalm 72; Phil. 2:9-11). All will be required to worship Him (Zech. 14:16-17). Everyone will then worship God as the Father and Christ as the Son and King of the earth, Emmanuel, the ruler of this planet and “God with us”.

A Philosophy of Life

“The place whereon thou standest is holy ground.”

“The place whereon thou standest”—that is the most neglected real estate in the world. We look for happiness, good fortune, and peace, everywhere on earth—except in the place where we happen to be. “If only I were somewhere else”—that is the refrain we continually hear. Men in business, lying down on the positions which they have, dream of success. If only they were in another line. Husbands and wives, making a miserable failure of their homes, are sure they would be happy if only they had married differently. Many a man making a mess of his life in Oshkosh, is certain that he would cut a great figure in the world if he could live in New York.

We are forever trying to change our positions, when what most of us need is to change ourselves, so that we can make something worthwhile out of the positions we are in. Multitudes of folk need, above all else, to see that not some other place, but the place whereon they stand, is holy ground.

—Harry Emerson Fosdick

So What Do You Know?

Matching Bible Brothers and/or Sisters

Each person in the left column has a brother and/or sister in the cluster of names below.

1. Esau, _____ (Gen. 25:26)
2. Chilion, _____ (Ruth 1:2)
3. Michal, _____ (I Sam. 14:49)
4. Japheth, _____ (Gen. 6:10)
5. Andrew, _____ (Matt. 4:18)
6. Kenaz, _____ (Judges 1:13)
7. Rebekah, _____ (Gen. 24:29)
8. Hophni, _____ (I Sam. 2:34)
9. Martha, _____ (John 11:1-2)
10. Cain, _____ (Gen. 4:1-2)
11. Eleazar, _____ (Num. 3:2)
12. Jotham, _____ (Judges 9:18)
13. Leah, _____ (Gen. 29:16)
14. Joses, _____ (Matt. 13:55)
15. Manasseh, _____ (Gen. 48:1)
16. Nahor, _____ (Gen. 11:27)
17. James, _____ (Matt. 4:21)
18. Benjamin, _____ (Gen. 35:24)
19. Aaron, _____ (Num. 26:59)
20. Jonathan, _____ (II Sam. 2:8)
21. Eliab, _____ (I Sam. 16:6-13)
22. Simeon, _____ (Gen. 35:23)
23. Joab, _____ (II Sam. 2:18)

Abel
Abihu
Abimelech
Abinadab
Abishai
Abram
Asahel
Caleb
David
Ephraim
Ham
Haran
Ishbosheth (Eshbaal)
Ithamar
Jacob
James
John

Jonathan
Joseph
Judas
Laban
Lazarus
Levi
Mahlon
Mary
Miriam
Moses
Nadab
Peter
Phinehas
Rachel
Shammah
Shem
Simon



Letters

Don't Short Cut

The Apostle John tells us that the love of God is to keep His Commandments. But we, as mortal creatures striving to reflect His spotless image, must never try to take a short cut as did Alexander the great, in a literal way. This is how the story goes:

"One day while passing through Asia Minor, Alexander came to the city of Gordium, where he saw what we call the Gordian knot. This knot was so twisted and tangled that no one had ever been able to untie it. There was a saying that the man who could untie the knot would rule the world. Alexander tried for a time to loose the cord but finally, losing his patience, he drew his sword and cut the knot."

So today when any one finds a short way out of a difficulty we say he has "cut the Gordian knot." But pertaining to the spiritual there is no quick and easy solution, for we read in Eph. 4:13: "Till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ." Knowing the truth of the matter, let us keep on working, watching and praying.

I am striving to live apart from the world around me, and also striving to fully control my most dangerous enemy, "self."

Kooskia, Idaho

R. B.

Needed: New Light

How very true the words that when men get a little worldly knowledge, it is almost impossible to get them to realize their own littleness, even those also who know and read the blessed Bible, like Professor W. F. Jamieson. It is as though while commencing to read, they have been swept by a train into a dark tunnel and are compelled to stop reading. It is not new eyes they need or a new book, but new light. Insufficient light, no light, or their own false light, is the source of their perplexities. How privileged we are indeed to have emerged from the long tunnel of darkness.

Minnedosa, Manitoba

E. H.

Pleased

The October 1981 issue of MEGIDDO MESSAGE caught my attention in our city library. I read it carefully and was pleased with its factual Christian teachings. May your efforts bear "fruit."

San Luis Obispo, California

J. M.

Not All Trials

The more we resist the temptation today, whatever it may be, the easier it is to do it tomorrow. We must at any cost keep the tension tight. The time is going by so fast. Our main worry should be, Have we redeemed it? Soon we shall be called to account.

Troubles, trials, testings come up, sometimes in bunches, sometimes singly. "Man is born unto trouble, as the sparks fly upward" (Job. 5:1-7). They have their purpose in a Christian's life. Obviously, a certain measure of them come to each of us. But if we ever wished to change places with someone else, let us read these words of Socrates', "If all our misfortunes were laid in one common heap whence everyone must take an equal portion, most people would be content to take their own and depart." Surely we can take our portion and with God's help grow in spite of them. God is only after new creatures, tried and purified.

But life is not all trials and troubles. There is sunshine in between. We can be happy that we have Christian friends, good homes, sufficient food and comfort and above all be happy we have truth helping us to prepare for an abundant entrance into the glorious Kingdom where all will be joy with no end to it. Shall we make it? We must. Let us be more determined to do right every day.

South Amboy, New Jersey

L. K.

Bearing Fruit

The Bible compares us to fruit trees. But unlike the fruit-bearing trees, our fruits must be as much in abundance in December as it is in any other month. We must strive for the good fruits of the Spirit, which are love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, faithfulness, goodness, self-control and longsuffering.

Our characters develop a bloom, then first a tiny fruit and on to maturity. For we cannot jump into salvation all at once. It takes a lot of soul-searching, getting rid of the old man and putting on the new. But whatever we do, we must not let our tiny fruit drop, thinking we will pick it up again next year, for next year may be too late. We must not put off until tomorrow what we can accomplish today. Today is for working, to become one with Christ so that on Judgment Day He may be able to say to us, "Welcome, my friend, I have a place prepared for you." It would be so sad indeed for Him to say, "Depart from Me, I never knew you, you worker of iniquity."

The days are growing shorter, the time is getting nearer. We must hurry for perfection, for Christ, our future Lord and King, will soon be here to reign! Let us be ready to meet Him!

The Messages and tapes mean so much to me. I can't imagine my life without them.

Conyers, Georgia

C. P.

Children Need Good Examples

It is my desire and my pleasure to turn to God, to serve Him as my Saviour. Many young men today are off to a very bad start. The absence of parental authority, the lack of discipline in the home, the moral laxity permitted in the schools, contrive together to give the modern youth an immature and unsettled mind, and no idea of responsibility to God, to law or to society.

The teenage prankster to be seen on the streets after dark in almost any urban community bears sad evidence of the lack of exhortation to be sober minded. Children lack experience, hence they need guidance along constructive lines. The youthful mind is plastic; impressions are easily made upon it. If parents, or those responsible, do not make an effort to get the right kind of impressions made on the mind, we may rest assured that nature will take its course and impressions of the wrong kind will be made. Both firmness and kindness are indispensable, and the great apostle Paul did not fail to impress this in his directions to the parents. In Eph. 6:1, 2, 4, he addresses the children, "Children obey your parents in the Lord; for this is right. Honor thy father and mother; which is the first commandment with promise." And then he addresses the fathers in Col. 3:21, "And, ye fathers, provoke not your children to anger, lest they be discouraged."

Children are creatures of imitation; they are prone to copy what they see the older generation do; hence a great responsibility rests on the grownups to show the youth a worthy example to pattern after.

Monrovia, Liberia

H.K.

My Goal

I have made it a duty to join you all in Sunday worship via your sermon cassettes, a rest from daily work, having my mind centered on God and His words. These cassettes help me tremendously in the walk toward the Kingdom.

Luke 20:36 is my goal; I am intent on keeping clear of corruption which is in the world. There is a warfare daily which we have to fight to make our calling and election sure. Perfect practice makes perfect! Yes, how much practice we need to attain our goal. Ofttimes we feel despondent; the evils are so persistent. Therefore we ought to give the more earnest heed to the process of making over our hearts to God's will. A careful daily cleansing is needed to keep our hearts pure and clean. These are no ordinary days, each day is precious in getting ready.

The straight and narrow way is not popular, but it is the only way which can lead to *real life*.

Crewe, England

N.T.

Finally, Brethren

Being Honest with Our Motives

Although we may not realize it, an enormous amount of our motivation is unconscious. What we may upon questioning quickly give as our motive may not be our true reason at all.

Such a condition calls for honest examination as we try in the sight of God to learn the real explanation for our words and actions. Such examination becomes difficult because it calls for openness and honesty which few of us are accustomed to use when looking at ourselves. We are so accustomed to the false-front and cover-up that it is threatening to admit a less-than-ideal explanation for our behavior.

Especially is this true among our close Christian associates, before whom we strive to maintain an ideal image. Unless exceedingly honest, we have difficulty in admitting to motives which are less than the best. This unwillingness to admit inadequate (and sometimes ulterior) motives helps no one. In fact, it actually leads to self-deception. Thus we end up not knowing ourselves and our motives as well as we think we do.

But even if such a reaction is common, we dare not let it become normal and acceptable. If we are to be realistic and effective in our interaction with others and have hearts and lives pleasing to our heavenly Father, it is essential that we have insight into why we act and think as we do.

One problem with our unconscious cover-up is that our self-deception does not always deceive the discerning eyes of others—and it never deceives God. He sees the real motive and credits or discredits us accordingly. There is no falsifying, no favoritism, no bending of His opinions to justify our individual fancies.

As we mature in the Christian life, we want to check our motives more and more frequently, to see that they are consistent with our Christian ideals.

For such an activity, strict self-honesty and personal integrity are essential. Just as cover-up may become a habitual pattern as we refuse to face ourselves honestly, so openness may become a habitual pattern as we sincerely seek to know the truth about ourselves.

How seriously do I want to know the truth about myself? Will I let God's Word cleanse the depths of my unconscious mind so that even my motives are pure?

*Look out beyond, where skies are brighter,
Where darkness merges into day.
Look out beyond, it will grow lighter,
And hope's bright star shall light thy way.*

*Press firmly on nor falter ever.
The day will dawn in splendor bright
In that fair land where all is light!*

*So follow on to God's tomorrow,
And in that perfect Day rejoice;
Yes follow on where'er He leads,
Make Him your joy, your light, your choice.
Oh, look beyond, behold, and see
The Light of light that shines for thee.*

*Look out beyond, have courage ever,
And to that brighter life aspire;
Renew thy faith for each endeavor
If thou would'st gain thy heart's desire.*

*Oh, look beyond the sorrow, weeping,
Beyond when age shall dim our sight.
Oh, look beyond this weary night!*

*Yes, look beyond the watching, waiting,
Beyond the time when wars shall cease.
Oh, look beyond death, chill and icy!
Beyond the thousand years of peace:
Oh, look beyond, by faith, and see
Beyond it all—Eternity!*