

Megiddo Message

DEVOTED TO THE CAUSE OF CHRIST

Thy Word is a
lamp unto my
feet, and a light
unto my path.

Ps. 119:105

The testimony
of the Lord is
sure, making
wise the simple.

Ps. 19:7

The Fallacy of the Scarlet Thread (Part Three)

The Power of Pentecost

Authorized Personnel Only!

The Sabbath

Megiddo Message

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

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

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Editorially Speaking...

The Constructive Use of Guilt

Guilt is not a pleasant word. Usually it is a fearful hindrance. It conjures up ugly images of the tortures of self-abasement, anxiety and hostility. It can be a heavy burden which wrecks life with hand-wringing self-analysis. Its poison can paralyze the spirit and turn joy into cynicism.

But guilt can have positive effects. Actually, guilt is as harmful or as helpful as we make it. The man who has never felt guilty has no moral values. He may be sorry that he is caught, but he has no sense of having done wrong. Such a man recognizes no higher allegiance or authority. Most of us, however, have experienced the remorse of failing to meet expectations, and the intensity of such feelings is in direct proportion to our recognition of duty. If we apply this principle to our spiritual lives, the more we recognize our responsibility in the sight of God, the more sensitive we shall become to the slightest touch of sin. In this sense, guilt is one of the strongest motivations toward moral betterment.

By nature we are clever at devising defenses against having to deal with our guilt. One way is to blame circumstances, fate, the times. Shakespeare phrased it eloquently when he wrote, "When we are sick in fortune—often the surfeits of our own behavior—we make guilty of our disasters the sun, the moon and the stars, as if we were villains of necessity, fools by heavenly compulsion, knaves, thieves, and preachers by spherical predominance."

Another natural response to guilt is scapegoating. Our sinful natures seem to enjoy blaming other people. If our parents had brought us up better, we would be better. Or the whole trouble is the person with whom we are obliged to work. Or our environment is wrong. Or—or—if people would only behave more maturely toward us, *we* would be more mature.

Building such barricades around guilt may be a familiar way of dealing with it, but it is not a godly way. However, there are ways of making guilt a constructive force in our lives.

First, appreciate the moral values that make you feel guilty. The person never guilty never grows. The first step toward banishing an evil is learning to abhor that evil.

Perhaps you are guilty of failing to do your duty. Be thankful you have a duty to do. And next time you are tempted to shirk that duty, think of the people who are depending on you for the right example.

Don't blind yourself to the causes of your guilt. Face your wrongdoing honestly, admit it to yourself, confess it to your Father, and then turn from it. "Blessed is he whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered. Blessed is the man unto whom the Lord imputeth not iniquity, and in whose spirit there is no guile" (Ps. 32:1, 2). ● ●

The blood of Christ—

What is its wonder-working power—for you? for me?

What does God say?

Part III

The Fallacy of the Scarlet Thread

In Second Timothy 4, Paul the Apostle forewarned us of a situation that should arise after his time, a general apostasy from the true religion. Into the church that Christ had founded there should be introduced a system of teachings completely foreign to the teachings and precepts of its Founder. Salvation through Christ's shed blood is one of these.

The following are Paul's words to his son-in-the-faith, Timothy: "Preach the word; be instant in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort with all longsuffering and doctrine. For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears; and they shall turn away their ears from the truth, and shall be turned unto fables."

There is some relation between the words "fallacy" and "fable." The first definition of "fable" is, "To narrate ficticiously or falsely; compose or tell fables or myths, fabricate, lie, . . . a legendary story." "Fallacy" is defined as "anything that deceives the mind or eyes; delusive reasoning, delusion." Surely the fallacy of the scarlet thread is a fable, a lie, delusive reasoning.

In parts I and II of this series (see Vol. 58, No. 1 and 2) we saw that the Law of Moses did not prefigure the death of Christ for the sins of mankind. God's unequivocal demand is for righteousness—perfection. "Be ye holy, for I am holy." Eternal life is a gift, but a conditional gift.

Now we shall discuss another aspect of the Scarlet Thread—how did Christ die for our sins?

PRAYER

Eternal Father, Thou infinite Source of life and health and joy, and of all that makes life pleasant and agreeable: Thou art Beauty and Grace and Truth and Power. Thou art Light to every heart that beholds Thee, the life of every soul that loves Thee, the strength of every mind that seeks Thee.

It is our joy that we can never go beyond Thy reach; that even if we were to take the wings of the morning, and fly to the uttermost parts of the earth, or were we to make our bed in the nether world, there should we find signs of Thy presence and Thy power.

From our narrow and bounded world we would pass into Thy greater world. From our petty and miserable selves we would escape to Thee, to find in Thee the power and the freedom of a larger life.

We thank Thee for Thy saving grace which teaches us to deny ungodliness and worldly lusts, and to live soberly, righteously, and godly in this present evil world. Help us always to surrender to the authority of this grace or truth, knowing that salvation can come in no other way.

Help us to be strong in this grace, strong to battle against all the encroachments of the flesh. May we endure hardness as good soldiers of Jesus Christ. May our hands be trained to war and our fingers to fight, that we may wage a winning warfare against all that is defiling or mean.

Father, remind us of the truthfulness of the saying that if we would live with Christ in the world to come we must now die with Him. May we not rate Thy divine wisdom so low as to expect that Thou wilt do for us what we can do for ourselves, or that Christ did all the dying for us.

It is Thy plan to save and eternally bless every faithful one, all who value the magnificent prize Thou hast offered above every earthly consideration. But may we not expect the great Judge to be so tolerant as to say "Well done" to a servant who has not actually done well.

Grant that the things taking place in the world about us, fulfilling Thy divine predictions, may cause our faith to grow proportionately. May we think faith, talk faith, act faith, that others may be encouraged to live more consistent Christian lives, and prepare for a place in Thy heavenly Kingdom upon earth. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.

DISCOURSE

Paul was Christ's man. Each of his Epistles rings with the inspiration and gratitude and triumph he felt in knowing Christ. His incomparable life, His dynamic teaching, His peerless example, His suffering, death and triumphant resurrection so captivated the soul of Paul that he could not be silent. To "know" Christ, to "preach" Christ, to "win" Christ, to even be "crucified with" Christ—this was Paul's goal, if "by any means [he] might attain unto the resurrection of the dead." Life bereft of Christ was of all fates the most hopeless.

But we should observe how frequently Paul combines Christ's example and achievement with an admonition concerning the effort we ourselves must expend, if we would be saved. These are his words to his beloved Timothy: "Thou therefore endure hardness, as a good soldier of Jesus Christ. No man that warreth entangleth himself with the affairs of this life; that he may please him who hath chosen him to be a soldier. And if a man also strive for masteries, yet is he not crowned, except he strive lawfully. . . . Remember that Jesus Christ of the seed of David was raised from the dead, according to my gospel: wherein I suffer trouble, as an evil doer, . . . Therefore I endure all things for the elect's sake, that they may also obtain the salvation which is in Christ Jesus with eternal glory. It is a faithful saying: For if we be dead with him, we shall also live with him: if we suffer, we shall also reign with him: if we deny him, he also will deny us" (II Tim. 2:3—13).

Notice the action words in these verses: endure, war, strive lawfully, remember, suffer trouble, endure all things, be dead with Christ, suffer with Christ. And what is the goal of all this endeavor? "Therefore I endure all things for the elect's sake, that they may also obtain the salvation which is in Christ Jesus with eternal glory" (v. 10). Not that the elect were saved already, but that "*they may also obtain the salvation which is in Christ Jesus with eternal glory.*" Surely there is no trace of the scarlet thread here!

Furthermore, the death of Christ must be *our* death; the suffering of Christ must be *our* suffering: "It is a faithful saying: For if we be dead with him, we shall also live with him: if we suffer, we shall also reign with him"—*we* must die to sin as He died; *we* must suffer the death of our carnal ways, just as He suffered.

Saved By Grace

But theologians see certain evidence of the scarlet

thread in Eph. 2:8, 9. How can works of righteousness be essential to salvation, they reason, when Paul said so plainly, "By grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: not of works, lest any man should boast." They point out that if we work out our own salvation we might in the day of Judgment appear before the Judge and say, "See, Lord, what I have done."

The following verse disproves their position: "For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them." God has ordained that we should walk in good works—and how can we walk in good works without effort on our part? Impossible!

Let us study Eph. 2:8, 9 with the thought of ascertaining Paul's meaning. "By grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves. . . ." On surface reading, these words do seem to lend credence to the theory that we can do nothing to save ourselves. A religious tract currently in circulation pictures a man falling rapidly through space but clinging desperately to a large umbrella—adeptly labeled "good works"—in a futile attempt to save himself.

But was this Paul's meaning?

Most certainly we cannot save ourselves without God's help. Of ourselves we cannot even know the way. Every way of man being "right in his own eyes," we are utterly powerless to judge which action is pleasing to God and which is not. "There is a way that seemeth right unto a man, but the end thereof are the ways of death" (Prov. 16:25)—death, not salvation.

God asks us to do all that we can toward our salvation. He gives us His grace, His divine knowledge, and tells us how we can use it to obtain eternal favor; however, we cannot save ourselves. We cannot give immortality to ourselves. After we have done all that He asks of us, after we have lived according to all the mandates of His law, then He will do for us what we cannot do for ourselves: "He will come and save us." "Salvation is of the Lord" (Jon. 2:9), and by His grace we are saved. There is no place here for the scarlet thread!

God's Gift

Salvation is "*the gift of God*" (Eph. 2:8). The knowledge that will fit us for eternal life is free. "Ho, every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters, and he that hath no money; come ye, buy and eat; yea, come, buy wine and milk without money and without price" is the invitation of the Eternal (Isa. 55:1).

and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, right—Salvation itself is the gift of God—it cannot be earned. As we said earlier, all the work humanly possible could not *earn* a reward of immortality. But God will not give salvation indiscriminately. Salvation is a conditional gift.

“Not of Works”

But what, you will ask, did Paul mean when he said, “*Not of works*, lest any man should boast”? Wasn’t he saying that we are saved by grace and not by works?

Popular thinking is along this line, that works are not necessary to obtain salvation. We quote from a current theological writer: “Salvation is not to be gained through our own efforts toward goodness. This is not your own doing; it is the *gift* of God. Man can do nothing to earn the favor of God; he can only receive through faith that which is freely given.”

As we said earlier, it has been suggested that if God made our salvation depend on our works, we would appear before the great white throne saying, “God, look at what I did!” But is this Paul’s thought? Haven’t we already observed abundant Bible evidence that individual effort is exactly what *is* necessary for salvation?

Accepting this text at face value, we can be sure that Paul is *not* implying *good* works, for the producing of genuine good works never occasions boasting in the least degree, but rather the most profound humility. Furthermore, Paul cannot be speaking of the good works which he so frequently recommends and commands throughout his epistles, lest his own writings become flatly contradictory.

Let us examine other of his statements.

“Wherefore come out from among them [the worldlings],” he wrote to the Corinthians, “and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you, and will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty.” God’s favor *can* be secured through *our* efforts toward goodness.

And read further: “Having therefore these promises, dearly beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God” (II Cor. 6:17, 18; 7:1). We must *cleanse ourselves*.

And again he wrote, “Charge them that are rich in this world, that they be not highminded, nor trust in uncertain riches, but in the living God, who giveth us richly all things to enjoy; that they do good, that they be rich in good works, . . . laying up

in store for themselves a good foundation against the time to come, that they may lay hold on eternal life” (I Tim. 6:17—19). That “they be *rich in good works*”—this was Paul’s exhortation. Indeed, salvation is to be obtained through *our own efforts toward godliness!*

Furthermore, it was Paul’s expectation that he personally would win favor and eternal rewards because of his own efforts: “I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith: henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day” (II Tim. 4:7, 8).

What then are we to conclude from Eph. 2:9? Shall we take the position that when Paul said “Not of works, lest any man should boast,” he was contradicting other statements he had already made? Most certainly not! For in the next verse of Ephesians 2 he repeated this same conviction: that we *are* saved by works of righteousness. “For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them.”

This text should sharply correct any misconceptions of Paul’s belief in the doctrine of grace. We are His workmanship, His making, and must co-operate with Him in making of ourselves a new creature. And this means *work*. It means individual effort. It means Christian behavior at all times and under all circumstances. “Which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them”—good works are the end product which God had in mind from the start.

What, then, did Paul mean by “not of works, lest any man should boast”?

Living in an age when Judaism was still strong, when many Jews insisted that they should live by the then-outmoded law of Moses, Paul could have referred to the “works of the law,” the same righteousness in which the hypocritical scribes and Pharisees of Jesus’ day had prided themselves. Or he could have directed these words against any self-imposed human effort which is not sponsored or commanded by the God of heaven. In I Corinthians 13, Paul enumerated a few such self-directed efforts, for example: giving all our goods to feed the poor, or giving our bodies to be burned. God commands that we should cease from all these “works of the flesh,” but He has ordained that we should promote “good works.”

This was what Paul taught: “In all things showing thyself a pattern of good works: . . . for the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men, teaching us that, denying ungodliness

ously, and godly, in this present world; looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of . . . our Saviour Jesus Christ; who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works" (Tit. 2:7, 11—14)—that he might "*purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works.*"

The fallacy of the scarlet thread is too obvious to miss!

How Are "All Dead"?

Another passage we should examine for a trace of the scarlet thread is II Corinthians 5. Let us study the narrative, beginning with verse 14: "For the love of Christ constraineth us; because we thus judge, that if one died for all, then were all dead." The following verse shows *how* all are dead: "And that he died for all, that they which live should not henceforth live unto themselves, but unto him which died for them, and rose again." It is obvious that Paul in saying "all are dead" did not refer to physical death. The members of the Church at Corinth were still physically alive; but they were dead in the respect "that they which live should not henceforth live unto themselves, but unto him which died for them." It was their duty to die to sin and live unto God, and this was the respect in which Christ had died for them.

Colossians 2:20 expresses the principle succinctly: "Wherefore if we be dead with Christ from the rudiments of the world"; and Romans 6:10, 11 confirms: "For in that he [Christ] died, he died unto sin once [that was the virtuous death He died]: but in that he liveth, he liveth unto God. Likewise reckon ye also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord." If we follow Christ's example, dying to sin as He died, then we shall indeed *be all dead*.

But it is for us to take our part in the dying, to die *with* Christ. II Corinthians 5:17 adds weight to what Paul was saying about the figurative death that all must die with Christ: "Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new." If a man is *in* industry, *in* politics, *in* merchandising, we understand that he has chosen that line in preference to all other lines. Likewise, the man "in Christ" has chosen the Christ-life in preference to all other types of life. In short, he is "dead" to lesser interests.

Can we possibly justify the belief that a righteous and merciful God would give His only Son, holy and sinless, to be the sacrifice for our sins to appease His disfavor toward the human race? Is

such an offering an example of that divine justice that will not permit one man to die for the sins of another (Ezek. 18:20, 21)?

Christ Made Sin?

The doctrine of the atonement is not Biblical, yet many Bible students see this scarlet thread in II Cor. 5:21, "For he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him."

How could Christ be made sin for us? Christ was sinless; He never disobeyed the law of His Father after the right way had been made known to Him. His was a life of perfect obedience; the author of the book of Hebrews describes Him as "holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners" (7:26). He was "in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin" (4:15). How, then, could He be "sin for us"? Sin is "the transgression of the law" (I John 3:4); it is not an object that may be borne and carried.

What is the divine plan for the removal of sin? The Bible uses various terms: sin may be "overcome," "turned from," "laid aside," "cleansed" away. How shall the thief free himself from the sin of stealing? "Let him that stole steal no more" (Eph. 4:28). Here is a divine principle: Sin can be cleansed only as the sinner himself stops sinning. In the words of the prophet Isaiah, the sinner must "cease to do evil; learn to do well" (Isa. 1:16); then he is no longer a sinner. How, then, could a sinless man who never transgressed God's law be "made sin"?

The Concordant Version of the Bible phrases II Cor. 5:21 more clearly: "For the One not knowing sin, He makes to be a sin offering for our sakes that we may be becoming God's righteousness in him." He made Him to be a *sin offering*, not that He made Him sin. God required purity of His Son, no less than of the other members He chooses from the human family. Christ submitted Himself wholly to His Father's will; He had to offer His body a living sacrifice just as every prospective son of God must do (Rom. 12:1), and *that* was a sin offering.

In Wilson's *Emphatic Diaglott*, an interlineary translation of the New Testament from the Greek, II Cor. 5:21 is rendered much the same as in the Concordant Version: "For Him who knew no sin, he made a Sin-offering, on our behalf." This rendering is comprehensible. He made a sin offering, not by laying down His literal life, but by surrendering His right to think and speak and choose as He would have wished. This is the offering God

(Continued on page 22)

The Power of Pentecost

Pentecost was a day of earliest sacred significance. Meaning literally "fiftieth day," it came fifty days after Passover, and was the second of three Mosaic feasts. On the morrow after the Passover, Abib 15, Israel commenced the barley harvest, presenting the first sheaf to the Lord; and fifty days later, Pentecost marked the conclusion of that harvest. Thus it was called the "Feast of Harvest" and "The Day of the First Fruits." Later, Pentecost became a day when the law was read in the congregations of Israel, a memorial day to the Law of the Lord.

For us, the richest significance of Pentecost comes with the advent of the Christian era. Pentecost, and the giving of the Holy Spirit that accompanied it, was the Apostles' assurance that Jesus, who had lived, died, and been resurrected, was now alive forevermore—He had been glorified at the Father's right hand!

Abib, the first month of the Bible year, began this year on the evening of March 26. Jesus' new Passover, one day earlier than the Jewish Passover instituted at the time of the Exodus, on the fourteenth of Abib, came this year on the evening of April 7. Fifty days later, numbering from "the morrow after the Sabbath," is Pentecost, or May 30.

PENTECOST becomes significant only as we see it against the background of Christ's commission to the disciples. The gift of power was the commission's complement. "Go ye into all the world and preach the gospel."

The story of post-Pentecostal excursions into the pagan world has become so familiar that we have ceased to wonder at the inspired tenacity of those who conceived and executed the plan. Judged superficially, they were men destitute of the usually reckoned requisites for success, yet their enemies testified that they had turned the world upside down! Whatever they lacked in appearance they made up in spiritual power.

But the power was confusing. Spiritual power is always confusing to those who do not understand it. The comment of some of the onlookers on the

day of Pentecost gives us some idea of their surmises. Here was a manifestation that was ripping history in two. Here was a demonstration of divine energy of which the prophet had dreamed, but which neither event nor imagination could parallel—and some who beheld fell back on the stale explanation that the men in this supernatural drama were intoxicated!

But when crowds surged into the infant church after Peter's first sermon, men and women found a new incentive and became possessed by a new conviction—there was no other explanation than that this was the power that Christ had promised.

"Ye shall receive power, when the Holy Spirit is come upon you" (Acts 1:8). Notice He said, "Ye shall receive *power*." Was there any alternative? Was there any possible alternative to this promise of spiritual power, any other gift which could have accomplished the work God had planned for the years to follow?

Jesus could have said, "Ye shall receive wealth." Money talks. It can whisper behind closed doors and obtain privileges which nothing else can touch. Wealth could accomplish wonders, but it could not clean a pagan city or convict a pagan soul.

"Ye shall receive personal fame." Such fame would run its slogans round the world. Fame invites homage, whether real or servile. If fame could team up with wealth, together they could startle and bribe the world. But Jesus' promise was not fame.

"Ye shall receive knowledge." Scholarship can always claim allegiance. Those who are competent to answer the questions of the common people and to suggest remedies for problems will never lack followers. Wealth—fame—wisdom—these might have lent a transitory elegance to the witness of the apostolic church, only later to mark the place in history where they were submerged by the hostile paganism. Jesus knew that in a hostile world His Church could be established only with the aid of spiritual power. And so He promised a special gift to accompany that special commission—the Holy Spirit. Was there any alternative?

Men crave power. In the early days of his development, man lived in a hostile environment—

the forces of nature seemed to be his enemies. Dangerous beasts threatened his existence. His greatest need was that of physical power.

But when man had bent such circumstances to his will, he moved on to the next stage when power of intellect became the great necessity. Mere muscles could never suffice. It could not count or write; it could not re-count or store up the results of experiences against tomorrow. And so to strength of arm was added power of mind, until man had covered the distance that lies between the crudeness of a cave-dwelling and the climbing beauty of the superjet.

But here is our difficulty. It is the power of that same intellect which has split the atom and ushered in a new era of nuclear energy. Men are bewildered as they realize that at their disposal is power that can tear civilization to bits and reduce proud standards of living to nothing.

It is easy to see from the concluding chapters of the gospels that the hopes which the disciples had entertained lay in broken fragments around the cross. The Kingdom for which they had longed and labored seemed ended in the blood-red sunset of Calvary. And for the moment it seemed that no exhibition of physical power could realize that Kingdom, that no intellectual power could touch the core of the appalling problem. And so they waited in prayer and faith for the coming of the promise of Jesus.

And then it came. The resources of their own personalities were liberated. Their inhibiting fears were shattered. They reshaped the geography of the Mediterranean world in the crucible of their own passion and wrote along their missionary trails a new history of devotion. These men and women were strong in that quality of genuine saintliness which has never been exceeded.

In due time, their mission accomplished, their power was withdrawn. And what remains? What of us? Must we be spiritually weak and inert because we lack the power that energized those disciples of long ago? No, no! A thousand times no! God does not call us into His exalted service and then leave us powerless and impotent. In fact, ours is the "more excellent way," for now "abideth faith, hope, charity, these three; but the greatest of these is charity" (I Cor. 12:31; 13:13). Ours is the power of Bible love, that love which is very patient, very kind; that knows no jealousy, makes no parade gives itself no airs, is never rude, never selfish, never irritated, never resentful; that love that is never glad when others go wrong; love that is gladdened by goodness, always slow to expose, always eager to believe the best, always hopeful, and

always patient—that love is power indeed (I Cor. 13, Moffatt Bible).

We today still have that power which the apostle Paul found in the gospel of Christ which, he said, "is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth" (Rom. 1:16). Again he wrote, "For God hath not given us the spirit of fear; but of power, and of love, and of a sound mind" (II Tim. 1:7).

Are we men and women of spiritual power? If Christianity is to have any power in this world, we must demonstrate its ability to bring our emotions into subjection, to refine our lives and redirect our inclinations. The operation of that dynamic power begins in your heart and mine. And it spreads from one flame-kindled soul to another. It brings one will after another into the bondage of Christ. It is mighty to pull down strongholds of evil.

There is no reason why we should be spiritually impotent. If we use the spirit of the gospel now to mold our lives, we too shall receive power—power far surpassing that bestowed at Pentecost—at the return of Jesus when the Holy Spirit is renewed. ●●

Words to WALK By

No pain, no palm; no thorn, no throne; no gall, no glory; no cross, no crown.

Each sin has its door of entrance; keep that door closed.

To speak wisely may not always be easy; but not to speak ill requires only silence.

The whole trouble with saving up for a rainy day is you've got to work through the best weather to do it.

The truth needs no crutches; if it limps, it's a lie.

"The secret of patience is doing something else in the meantime."

"Too many people itch for what they want without scratching for it."

All that we send into the lives of others comes back into our own.

Beware of two besetting sins: hardness of heart and softness of head.

I care not if GOD is on my side; my constant hope and prayer is that I may be found on GOD'S side.

—Abraham Lincoln

MEGIDDO MESSAGE

AUTHORIZED PERSONNEL ONLY!

An essay by a fifteen-year-old high school student

Man is born. Man lives. Man dies. Afterlife is the term given to life after death. Papal and Protestant Christianity give this hope to their members. If you are good, you go to heaven. If you are bad, eternal damnation in hell is your reward.

But wherein is the sense of saying that after death there is life? Is that not a contradiction? The hope of the majority of churches of the world is not simply a matter of reward and punishment, but the hope that there is a spirit or soul which survives the body after death.

God is true to His Word. His Word explains the matter fully. It does help, though, if one does not depend entirely on man's fallibility in translating the Scriptures; so let us find the meaning of the original Hebrew word translated "soul." Definitions* are: "a living creature; a person; sometimes applied to animals; life; beast; body; breath; creature; man; mind; one's own; person." This Hebrew word, *nephesh*, is not defined as "immortal."

The soul is a whole living person: "seventy souls" went down with Jacob into Egypt (Ex. 1:5); "eight souls" were saved in Noah's day (I Pet. 3:20); Paul was one of "two hundred seventy-six souls" who were saved from the shipwreck in a storm.

Of the 1686 times the word soul is used in the Bible, nowhere is it described as immortal, undying, as living forever, or in any way deathless. In fact, "the soul that sinneth, it shall die" (Ezek. 18:20). Notice the interchangeable use of "soul" and "life" in Psalm 78:50, "He [God] spared not their soul from death, but gave their life over to the pestilence." The apostle Peter spoke of souls being destroyed: "And it shall come to pass, that every soul, which will not hear that Prophet, shall be destroyed from among the people" (Acts 3:23).

What a mystery the Medieval Church set upon the soul of the Bible, and passed on to her daughters in the Reformation. Yet the Authorized Douay Version of the Bible says in Ecclesiasticus 17:29, "The son of man is not immortal."

In the same mysterious fashion, the people of past and present cling to the twisted "modern"

meaning of the word "spirit" in the Bible. The Hebrew word most often translated spirit is *ruach*.** Definitions* from the lexicon are: "To breathe, to blow, especially with the nostrils... breath, life, the vital principle, which shows itself in the breathing of the mouth and nostrils." And to illustrate the use of the word in context, the lexicon refers to Ecclesiastes 12:7, "The spirit returns to God who gave it." At death, does not the breath return to the Giver? Does not the air that once filled the lungs return to the atmosphere? When a man dies, "he breathes his last breath, he returns to dust" (Ps. 146:4, NEB). And when a man is alive, "all the while my breath is in me, and the spirit of God [the breath which God gave him," margin] is in my nostrils" (Job 27:3). James says in chapter 2:26 of his book, "As the body without spirit [breath—marginal reference] is dead, so faith without works is dead also." Breath and spirit are the same.

Now before continuing, let us consider the logic of the doctrine of the soul, in comparison with the doctrine of the resurrection of the body. "Strangely enough, this belief [the immortality of the soul] is allied with the doctrine that after the soul has gone to heaven or hell, it will return at a certain time, called the Day of Judgment, to be reunited with the body and judged as to whether heaven or hell is to be its everlasting portion. Where is the consistency of sending a man to hell first, and then bringing him to judgment? Let the orthodox believer answer."† (Continued next page)

* Definitions are from Gesenius' Hebrew Lexicon.

** *Ruach* primarily signifies "air in motion, breath, or wind," from the verb *ruach*, to breathe: also "intelligence, courage, mind, disposition." The word is also translated as: "a puff of breath."—Parkhurst.

"*Neshamah* from the verb *nesham*, to breathe, occurs twenty-four times in the Old Testament, invariably rendered *pneuma* in the Greek, from the verb *pneo*, to blow, breathe, rendered wind, air, the breath of life, the spirit, a living spirit, that is, feeling."—Liddell and Scott.

Dr. McCullough says, "There is no word in the Hebrew language that signifies either soul or spirit in the technical sense in which we use the term as signifying something distinct from the body."—*Credibility of the Scriptures*, Volume II, page 471.

† Quotation is from *A Declaration of the Truth Revealed in the Bible As Distinguishable from the Theology of Christendom*, by C. C. Walker (Christadelphian), page 29.

The true doctrine of immortality is the resurrection of the body to "life-after-death." It teaches of immortality not being "inherited of the soul," but immortality as being attained only on the condition of believing the Gospel and obeying divine commandments. (Suggested verses: II Tim. 1:10; Gal. 6:8, 9; Rev. 22:14; Jas. 1:12; I John 2:17.)

The Bible says immortality is for those who have obeyed. It will be given after the resurrection, on earth, and not in the sky. (Suggested verses: Dan. 12:2; Luke 14:14; John 11:24; I Thess. 4:16; Acts 24:15; I Cor. 15:13, 14.) The picture and the story of the resurrection is given in a nutshell in Luke 20:35, 36: "They which shall be accounted worthy to obtain that world, and the resurrection from the dead, neither marry, nor are given in marriage; neither can they die any more: for they are equal unto the angels; and are the children of God, being the children of the resurrection."

Those who uphold the doctrine of the immortality of the soul say that when a soul goes to heaven, it goes to be with Jesus. But they, in so saying, deny Jesus' own testimony, "And no man hath ascended up to heaven" (John 3:13). Those who have entered heaven must be AUTHORIZED PERSONNEL ONLY. Jesus was certainly authorized to enter heaven, for at the Last Supper He said, "Whither I go, ye cannot come" (John 13:33). If man were truly authorized to enter heaven (the

heaven where God dwells), explain Peter's words of a righteous king, "Men and brethren, let me freely speak unto you of the patriarch David, that he is both dead and buried. . . . For David is not ascended into the heavens" (Acts 2:29, 34).

God has stated: "The heaven, even the heavens, are the Lord's; but the earth hath he given to the children of men" (Ps. 115:16).

I would like to quote these words of true Bible teaching expressed in poetry by Edgar Lee Masters:

*Ye young debaters over the doctrine
Of the soul's immortality,
I who lie here was the village atheist,
Talkative, contentious, versed in the arguments
Of the infidels.
But through a long sickness
Coughing myself to death,
I read the Upanishads and the poetry of Jesus.
And they lighted a torch of hope and intuition
And desire which the Shadow,
Leading me swiftly through the caverns of darkness,
Could not extinguish.
Listen to me, ye who live in the senses
And think through the senses only:
Immortality is not a gift,
Immortality is an achievement;
And only those who strive mightily
Shall possess it.*

Let's Get Acquainted

Priscilla and Aquila

A STUDY of the life of either of these godly characters alone is difficult—perhaps we should say impossible, since one of them is never mentioned without the other. They were workers together with God, and a great source of strength and help to the early Christian Church.

Aquila was a native of Pontus, a rugged region of northeast Asia Minor, near the Black Sea. Being a Jew, he probably had a Hebrew name; but that has not been recorded for us. We know him only by the name Aquila, a Roman name meaning "eagle." The eagle was the emblem of the Roman army. The name Priscilla means "ancient, old-fashioned simplicity, worthy or venerable," as belonging to a former time. From the prominence given that name in Roman inscriptions and legends, some writers have concluded that Priscilla belonged to a distinguished Roman family.

According to the historical account, Priscilla

and Aquila had with other Jews been expelled from Rome by the edict of Claudia in A. D. 52 because of a disturbance that some Jews had caused. Leaving Rome, Aquila and Priscilla then made their home in Corinth.

By trade they were tent makers, and it is in this connection that we first learn of them. The narrative reads: "Paul departed from Athens, and came to Corinth; and found a certain Jew named Aquila, born in Pontus, lately come from Italy, with his wife Priscilla; . . . and came unto them. And because he was of the same craft, he abode with them, and wrought: for by their occupation they were tentmakers" (Acts 18:1—3).

There is no indication that Priscilla and Aquila were Christians before Paul met them in Corinth. Rather, it seems that the tent-making trade is what brought them in contact with each other. Perhaps Paul might have thought he could find work with Aquila for a time.

Can you not imagine Paul taking the oppor-

tunity to preach the gospel of Christ to these two honest-hearted souls? Paul was fired with enthusiasm, and he used these days of looming tent cloth to make converts also.

For a year and a half, Paul made his home with Aquila and Priscilla. What spiritual knowledge they must have acquired from this Christian teacher! We can imagine questions and answers flying swiftly as Paul, Aquila and Priscilla sat together in Aquila's shop, using their needles to make or repair tents. They were not ashamed of common manual labor, and we can be sure that they did business honestly and fairly with all who came to trade. They were in the tent business, to be sure; but they gave beauty to that lowly task by using it to glorify God.

When Paul moved onward in his missionary endeavors, Priscilla and Aquila were at his side. They had now become able teachers, devoted to Paul and to the cause for which he lived and labored. Their oneness and steadfastness in spiritual concerns caused Paul to designate them "my fellow-workers in Christ Jesus" (Rom. 16:3). They were workers, not shirkers. They worked wholeheartedly and energetically for the cause of Christ. So trustworthy and sincere were Priscilla and Aquila that Paul left them at Ephesus to help teach the Christian church located there while he went on to Jerusalem and from there to other cities.

It was while Priscilla and Aquila were living in Ephesus that they became acquainted with Apollos. "He was an eloquent man, skilful in the use of the scriptures. He had had some instruction about the Way of the Lord, and he talked with burning zeal and taught painstakingly about Jesus, though he knew of no baptism but John's. He spoke very confidently in the synagogue at first, but when Priscilla and Aquila heard him, they took him home and explained the Way of God to him more correctly" (Acts 18:25, 26, Goodspeed).

These two godly persons had a knowledge of God's way that was deep-rooted and profound. And they coupled that knowledge with a fervent desire to impart it to others. They invited Apollos to their home and taught him the truth of God and explained more fully the way of salvation as they had learned it from the apostle Paul. We can see how well they performed their task when we realize that Apollos became a great Christian missionary. So effective was Apollos' preaching of the true gospel that some of the Corinthians put him ahead of Paul. We realize that this was a sign of carnality and immaturity on their part, because Paul and Apollos were both preaching the same gospel and were engaged in the same great cause. But it does

show to a great extent the teaching ability and thoroughness of Aquila and Priscilla.

Paul gives us fuller insight into the passionate desire of Aquila and Priscilla to bind the Christians of those early days together in godly fellowship. To the Corinthian Church Paul wrote, "Aquila and Priscilla greet you much in the Lord, with the church that is in their house" (I Cor. 16:19, Scofield Bible). And in Romans, Paul sent his greetings to these two helpers in Christ Jesus and "the church that is in their house" (Rom. 16:5). Apparently these two Christian partners opened the doors of their home and made it a place of regular assembly for the Christians. No doubt they did much of the teaching also, as we have seen that they were able teachers in their experience with Apollos.

Apparently at some time the lives of Priscilla and Aquila were in danger for the sake of their friendship and association with Paul. We have no details, only a reference to this by Paul in his letter to the Romans. Speaking of them he said, they "risked their necks to save my life. Not only I but also all the churches among the heathen thank them" (Rom. 16:4, Goodspeed). Yes, all the Christian churches were grateful for this show of bravery and devotion. They were probably thankful, too, that the life of the great Apostle had been spared. Perhaps a plan had been devised in which Priscilla and Aquila took an active part.

We can understand why these early churches would give thanks to anyone who had any part whatever in keeping Paul from harm, their great teacher and missionary, as long as possible. They felt they needed the help of this great Apostle in their own daily struggles. They needed his example; they needed his letters which exhorted them in the way of righteousness; they needed his example which strengthened and encouraged them in the paths of holiness. We, too, owe Priscilla and Aquila our thanks for whatever they did for Paul. What would we do if his letters had never been written or recorded for us? How much essential knowledge we would have missed!

It is interesting to note that Priscilla is often mentioned before Aquila when the two names occur together. Some writers suggest that Priscilla may have become a Christian before her husband, or perhaps she had more strength of character. Or perhaps there is no real reason for her being mentioned first.

But of this we are certain: they labored harmoniously together in the service of the Church. Apparently they had mutually agreed to put Christ and His teachings first in their lives, and to do

everything they could to help others do the same.

We would do well to follow the example they set and strive to live so that our lives may serve in some way for the furtherance of the gospel we profess. Remember, the gospel we profess is the same old-time religion that Priscilla and Aquila stood for, though we are living under circumstances so much easier than they experienced. They felt the heat of the day; we are privileged to work in the closing hours of the day of salvation.

May their zeal and steadfastness inspire us to emulate their noble example. ●●

From an earnest reader—

Stoop Labor

AS I SAT down this morning to have my lone devotional meeting with God to give me food for the day, I read this thought-provoking article.

In some agricultural areas farmers have need of what they term "stoop labor." These are workers who handpick fruits, such as strawberries, or set out seedlings that have to be specially handled. It is back-breaking toil. Not many flock to this type of job.

How comparable to the Christian life, I thought. Many are in the broad fields of self-importance, and few in the narrow paths of self-denial. Because the Christ-life is a stoop laborer's job, the majority feel they must be trained for better things than being servants, engaged in the lowly service of the Lord.

In their hurried life to make a name for themselves, they cannot be bothered with such stoop labor as speaking the soft word that turns away wrath, or patiently bearing the faults of others, or doing any menial task that would make life less burdensome for others. These are but small kindnesses, but often are worth more than words can express. It is stoop labor, to be sure, and many disdain it as non-essential. But the Master said, "Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me" (Matt. 25:40).

The world rushes by as if the other fellow did not exist. "Hurrah for me! You take care of yourself, and I will take care of myself." But burdens and cares multiply and suffering continues, as we can see. If we who know better gripe and complain because we are called upon to render lowly service during our days of probation, are we not haughty, are we not highminded and worse than the world?

Let us reflect on the words of the great apostle Paul: "Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus." The mind controls the reactions. It

is the mind, not the overworked hands, not the tired feet, that rebels. It is the mind that can make our humble station in life bring glory to God. True, the right frame of mind can make a challenge of the most drab, menial job. But the wrong frame of mind makes a miserable chore out of the most pleasant duty.

Do we realize that we are called upon to be the servants of the Most High God? Any service, however menial, in His name we should consider a privilege and an honor. Unmindful of the world, we are being trained for greatness, to be kings and priests. Every stoop job is a part of our training. Such jobs are included in the plan of salvation and cannot be by-passed as unimportant. Whenever and wherever the opportunity for such service arises, it must be rendered.

Today we are servants. Tomorrow we may sit with the King in authority. What a wonderful pathway of service. What a blessing to be thus singled out for duty. A life spent in self-denial and crucifixion will lead to honor, glory, immortality.

If ours is a stoop job, let us not mind but all the while keep the glory in view, and the work will be easy. Jesus for the joy set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame. Today He is glorified, sanctified, sitting at the right hand of God, enjoying the fruits of His well-spent but brief life. Soon He is coming to call His servants to account. May our labor of love be such as to meet His "well done, thou good and faithful servant: enter thou into the joy of thy Lord."

L. M. K.

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MEGIDDO MESSAGE

UNDERSTANDING THE BIBLE

"Study to shew thyself approved unto God."

The Hell of the Bible

FOR CENTURIES clergymen and ecclesiastical leaders have pictured in gory detail the sufferings of the wicked and the unbelievers in hell. It has been pictured as a sort of everlasting incinerator where the fire burns continually but somehow does not consume. Evangelical ministers have preached that God, whom they believe to be a God of justice and judgment and infinite wisdom, condemns millions to this flaming torture from which there is no escape.

Such a concept of justice would never be tolerated in our courts. It would be accounted a heinous crime to torture an animal in a flame; and for a jury to sentence a human being to any form of torment, even of short duration, would be considered an outrage. Should anyone expose a human being to a flame, even for a few minutes, the whole civilized world would rise up against that individual.

Yet the doctrine of eternal torment, everlasting punishment, without any hope of release, is still being taught in many churches today.

We shall commence our study, outlined as follows:

- I. What Is Hell?
 - A. The Origin of Hell
- II. The Hell of the Bible
 - A. Sheol in the O. T.
 - B. Hell in the New Testament

What is hell? Where is hell? What is its duration? We go to the Bible itself for the answers.

I. WHAT IS HELL?

"Hell as generally understood is the abode of evil spirits; the infernal regions, where the devil rules supreme, and whither lost or condemned souls go after death to suffer indescribable torments and eternal punishment either for wickedness inherited from the sin of Adam or for more or less serious infractions of the divine law. This region was generally thought of as being beneath the earth in the darkness of vast underground caverns."*

This definition of hell as stated by the encyclo-

pedia summarizes the theological viewpoint. A comparable definition is to be found in most dictionaries, other encyclopedias and Bible dictionaries. But it is not the hell of the Bible. The Old Testament Scriptures, covering some 4,000 years of Bible history, contain no reference to punishment in hell or hell-fire. The word hell appears 31 times in the Old Testament and in each case it refers to the grave (with the exception of Jonah 2:2, where the belly of the whale is referred to as "hell").

A. The Origin of Hell

The word hell occurs 54 times in the Authorized Version of the Bible; 31 of these are in the Old Testament, and 23 in the New Testament. In the Old Testament, Hell is translated from the Hebrew word **Sheol**; in the New Testament it is translated from the Greek words **Hades** and **Gehenna**, and once from **Tartarus**. According to **Cruden's Concordance**, "this word is generally used in the Old Testament to translate the Hebrew word **Sheol**, which really means simply the place of the dead without reference to happiness or the reverse."

1. **Sheol.** The Hebrew word **Sheol**, from which "hell" is translated in the Old Testament, also had other meanings. In the Hebrew language it meant a hollow place or a cave, a pit, or a grave. The word **Sheol** appears 65 times in the Old Testament. It is translated "**Hell**" 31 times, the "**grave**" 31 times and the "**pit**" three times.

Other reference books shed additional light on the subject. **The Catholic Encyclopedia for School and Home** states: "In the Old Testament the abode of the dead is called **Sheol**. The prophets and teachers of Israel made few formal statements about life after death, but many legends and folk tales arose about it. **SHEOL** was not thought of as a place of punishment."

Hasting's Encyclopedia of Religion and Ethics says concernig **Sheol**: "Early Hebrew writings give no detailed picture of the state after death to correspond with the pictures of Mohammedanism, Zoroastrianism, the religion of Egypt, or medieval Christianity. Prophetic influence was against any emphasis on the life after death. The place of the abode of the dead was called **Sheol**. The origin of the

* *Encyclopedia Americana* (1955), Vol. 14; p. 81.

word is uncertain. Another primitive quality of Sheol was its non-moral character. It was not a place of punishment or reward. There were no compartments for good and bad."

2. **Hades.** The Greek word **Hades**, from which Hell is translated, occurs eleven times in the Greek New Testament and ten of these times is translated "hell." According to Wilson's **Emphatic Diaglott** it is improperly translated in the common version ten times by the word **hell**. It is the word used in the Septuagint as a translation of the Hebrew word **Sheol**, denoting the abode or world of the dead, and means literally that which is in darkness, hidden, invisible or obscure. The Hebrew word **Sheol** is translated by **Hades** in the Septuagint [the first translation of the Old Testament Scriptures from Hebrew to Greek] 60 times out of 63, and though **Sheol** in many places may signify **Keber**, the grave as the common receptacle of the dead, yet it has the more general meaning of death; a state of death; the dominion of death.

We quote from Wilson's **Emphatic Diaglott**: "To translate **hades** by the word **hell**, as it is done ten times out of eleven in the New Testament, is very improper, unless it has the Saxon meaning of **helam**, to cover, attached to it.

"The primitive signification of **hell**, only denoting what was secret or concealed, perfectly corresponds with the Greek term **Hades**, and its Hebrew equivalent, **Sheol**, but the theological definition given to it at the present day by no means expresses it."

Hades was also found in Greek mythology. It was used as the name of the god of the underworld, supposedly a brother of the Greek god **Zeus**, the supreme deity, ruler of the celestial realm. **Hades** was also used to identify the kingdom of the dead.

3. **Gehenna.** **Gehenna** is a transliteration from Aramaic of the Hebrew **ge-hennom**, meaning "**Valley of Hinnom**". This was a place near Jerusalem used for the disposal of refuse. In the days of the kings, children were burned in sacrifice to the pagan god **Molech** in this valley (II Chron. 28:3; 33:6). The area took on a sinister significance and was later made into a garbage and rubbish heap into which was cast all kinds of filth, with the carcasses of beasts and the unburied bodies of criminals who had been executed. Continual fires were kept burning to consume these. The flames were believed to be the image of the fires of hell, hence **Gehenna** came to mean **hell**. **Gehenna**, as used in the New Testament, symbolizes death and utter destruction, but in no place signifies a place of eternal torment. Knowing that the disciples were familiar with the fires of **Gehenna**, Jesus refers to it as a symbol of destruction.

4. **Tartarus.** This word appears but once in the Scriptures—II Pet. 2:4—and is translated **hell** in the Authorized Version. According to a footnote in the Berkeley translation, **Tartarus** was the corresponding Greek name for the Jewish **Gehenna**. It was a product of Greek mythology, being a "deep and sunless abyss." Later **Tartarus** was described as the place in which the spirits of the wicked received their due punishment, synonymous with **Hades** or the lower world.

II. THE HELL OF THE BIBLE

Our English word "hell," like many other English words, has undergone a radical change of meaning through the years. Originally it meant simply "to cover, conceal, hide." From the same root come the English words **hill**, **hull**, **hole**, **hold**, **hollow**, and **helm**, all of which meant cover or conceal in Old English. Thus the word was properly used by the translators as synonymous with "grave" and "pit" in translating the Hebrew word "**Sheol**." In Old English **Hell** was also spelled **Heel** and carried the meaning of "covering as for protection," as to cover the roots of trees or plants.

A. Sheol—The Hell of the Old Testament

As previously stated, the Hebrew word **Sheol** appears 65 times in the Old Testament and is translated "hell" 31 times, "the grave" 31 times and "the pit" three times. The translators of the Revised Version left **Sheol** untranslated. As a rule, the translators of the King James Version have used the word **hell** when the text applies to wicked people and the words **grave** or **pit** when righteous persons are involved, leading the casual reader of the Bible to an erroneous conclusion. We will discuss some of the passages in which **Sheol** is used.

1. **Sheol in Genesis.** The first time **Sheol** appears in the Old Testament is in Genesis 37:35. Here the patriarch Jacob is mourning for his son Joseph whom he believes to be dead. He said: "I will go down into the grave [**Sheol**] unto my son mourning." Jacob later expressed a similar thought regarding his son Benjamin, saying that if he did not return safely from Egypt it would bring down his "gray hairs with sorrow to the grave [**Sheol**]" (Gen. 42:38). There is no thought of torment or punishment here; Jacob merely expected to go to the grave.

2. **Sheol in Job.** **Sheol** appears eight times in the book of Job. In the Authorized Version of the Bible it is translated "grave" five times, "hell" twice and "pit" once. Both the Revised Version and the New English leave **Sheol** untranslated in all

eight verses—an evidence that nothing more than the **grave** was meant in each case.

Job's use of the word **Sheol** in 14:13 proves conclusively that there is no knowledge or suffering in the grave. When his suffering became unbearable, Job prayed to the Lord to let him die, that he might sleep in the grave [**Sheol**] "until thy wrath be past," that is, until the resurrection. Other verses in Job where **Sheol** is used are 7:9; 11:8; 17:13, 16; 21:13; 24:19 and 26:6. If you have a Revised Version or New English Bible, compare these verses with the King James Version to better understand the meaning of **Sheol**. In Job 26:6, **Sheol**, translated **hell** in our common version, is equated with destruction thus lending no support to the theory of hell as a place of torment or punishment. "Hell [**sheol**] is naked before him, and destruction hath no covering."

3. Sheol in the Psalms. We find the Hebrew word **Sheol** appearing 15 times in the Psalms. In our common version it is translated "grave" eight times and "hell" seven times. Here again both the New English and the Revised Standard Version leave them all untranslated **Sheol**, the grave, the resting place of the dead, as meant by the Hebrew writers.

It is interesting to note that in our common version Psalm 16:10, a verse applied to Christ by Peter in his Pentecost sermon, is translated: "Thou wilt not leave my soul in hell [**Sheol**]; neither wilt thou suffer thine Holy One to see corruption." This translation is not in keeping with other translations of the word **Sheol** since the verse obviously refers to a righteous Person. It proves that **Sheol** was not thought of as a place of hell-fire or torment.

4. Sheol in the Proverbs. In the wisdom of Solomon we find the word **Sheol** more often translated "hell" than in any other book of the Old Testament. However, the fault lies with the translators and not with the Wise Man. In each instance the word in the original Hebrew is **Sheol**, the grave or the place of the dead. By the sixteenth century when the English translations of the Bible were being compiled, the doctrine of hell as a place of punishment had become firmly established and the translators seized upon any opportunity to condemn the wicked to hell. Thus **Sheol** has been translated "hell" in Prov. 1:12; 5:5; 7:27; 9:18; 15:24; 23:14; and 27:20. The NEB renders all **Sheol** with the exception of Prov. 23:14, rendered "death."

5. Sheol according to the prophets. Among the prophets, the Hebrew word **Sheol** appears nine times in Isaiah, five times in Ezekiel, twice in Hosea, once in Amos and once in Habakkuk. Of these it is twelve times translated "hell" and six

times "grave." Not once does its usage infer any form of torment or punishment nor does it suggest a separate resting place for the wicked. And contrary to the teaching that hell is everlasting, the prophet Hosea tells of its coming destruction: "O death, I will be thy plagues; O grave [**Sheol**], I will be thy destruction" (Hos. 13:14). Here the Prophet uses the only word of the Old Testament that is translated "hell" and says definitely that it **shall be destroyed**.

B. The Hell of the New Testament

By a careful analysis of a word-for-word translation of the Greek Testament we learn that **Hades** is in the New Testament what **Sheol** is in the Old Testament. It was the word commonly used in the Septuagint as a translation of **Sheol**, the Hebrew word denoting the abode or world of the dead. **Hades** occurs 11 times in the Greek Testament (the New Testament in Greek), and according to Wilson's **Emphatic Diaglott**, it is improperly translated "hell" ten times. Its general meaning is "death, a state of death, the dominion of death."

Gehenna, also translated **hell** in our common version, occurs 12 times, and as previously stated should not be translated at all since it is a proper name designating a specific place. **That which was consigned to Gehenna was destroyed, not preserved in torment.** The people of Jesus' day were well acquainted with Gehenna and would have associated it with destruction, annihilation.

1. Hades according to Jesus. Jesus used the word **Hades** only three times in His discourses.

a. Concerning the destruction of Capernaum. Jesus' prophecy of the destruction of this wicked city is recorded in Matt. 11:23 and Luke 10:15. Jesus said of the city, "You shall be brought down to Hades" (RSV). The prophecy is against the city: it was to be destroyed. There is no suggestion of the city being tormented forever. But as it was prophesied, Capernaum did literally disappear. Its site is now "a tumbled mass of stones."

b. Concerning the church. Jesus also used **Hades** when He spoke to Peter concerning the establishment of His church: "Thou art Peter [**Petros**], and upon this rock [**Petra**] I will build my church; and the gates of hell [**Hades**] shall not prevail against it" (Matt. 16:18). The Revised Standard Version translates "the gates of hell" as "the powers of death." Jesus was saying that nothing could prevent the fulfilling of His Father's plan, the establishment of His church.

c. Concerning the Rich Man. Jesus' use of **Hades** in the parable of the Rich Man and Lazarus

(Luke 16) is one of the most misunderstood in the Scriptures. The verses in question read: "And it came to pass, that the beggar died, and was carried by the angels into Abraham's bosom: the rich man also died, and was buried; and in hell he lift up his eyes, being in torments, and seeth Abraham afar off, and Lazarus in his bosom."

Taken literally, this passage would contradict other plain texts concerning the possibility of thought or feeling in the grave. The Scriptures being divinely inspired, such contradictions cannot exist. The seeming contradiction is caused by man's interpretation.

The verses in question are part of a parable, hence cannot be accepted literally. Although Jesus did not specify that it was a parable, we read that "without a parable spake he not unto them" (Mark 4:34, Matt. 13:34). Furthermore, our reason tells us that such an incident could not have taken place. The language of the parable is symbolic.

Of the rich man we read: "The rich man also died, and was buried; and in hell he lift up his eyes, . . ." The Greek word here translated hell is **hades**, meaning the grave. The New Catholic Bible reads: "And the rich man also died: and he was buried in hell," or in other words, he was buried in the grave, the proper place in which to bury the dead. Continuing, the Douay Version reads: "And lifting up his eyes when he was in torments, he saw Abraham afar off, and Lazarus in his bosom" (vs. 23). When was the rich man tormented? The key is in verse 30 of the same chapter: "If one went unto them from the dead, they will repent." The rich man is in torments **after the resurrection** when he sees the faithful in the Kingdom and himself cast out (Luke 13:28). No one is tormented in the grave. The Bible is specific concerning the state of the dead: "**The dead know not anything**" (Eccl. 9:5). [For further proof of the state of the dead see pages 14, 15 of the January 1971 issue of the **Megiddo Message**.]

2. Hades according to the apostles. It is apparent that the doctrine of hell-fire was not a tenet of the Apostolic Church as the subject is hardly mentioned in the writings of the apostles. The Greek word **Hades** appears only three times from the Gospels to Revelation. The apostle Peter used the word in his quotation from Ps. 16:10: "Thou wilt not leave my soul in hell [hades], neither wilt thou suffer thine Holy One to see corruption" (Acts 2:27). In verse 31 Peter applied the verse to Christ who had been raised from the grave. Peter's use of **hades** in translating the Hebrew word **Sheol** is proof that **hades** in the New Testament has the same meaning as **Sheol** in the Old Testament. Peter was

explaining that Jesus had been **restored to life, brought back from the grave, the hell of the Bible, and the only hell to which any man is destined.**

In all of the writings of Paul, constituting 21 of the 27 books of the New Testament, **he used the Greek word Hades only once**, and that in reference to the eventual destruction of the grave through Christ. Jesus had triumphed over the grave and it was Paul's one desire to attain to a resurrection like His, and to inspire his hearers that they might also gain the victory over death (I Cor. 15:55—58).

3. Hades according to Revelation. In His last message to mankind, delivered by an angel to John, Jesus made it clear that He had the power to free men from the grave, the hell of the Bible. He said: "I am he that liveth, and was dead; and, behold, I am alive for evermore, Amen; and have the keys of hell [hades] and of death" (Rev. 1:18). "The keys of hell and of death" symbolized Jesus' power and authority to free men from the tomb at His coming.

In the sixth chapter of Revelation we find Hell [Hades] pictured as following Death on the pale horse (v. 8). This verse presents a vivid picture of the destruction of the wicked at Armageddon. **There is no suggestion of torment or everlasting punishment, but annihilation, utter extinction of the wicked element.**

Again in Revelation 20 we find the word **hades** used. "And the sea gave up the dead which were in it; and death and hell [hades] delivered up the dead which were in them: and they were judged every man according to their works. And death and hell [hades] were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death" (vs. 13, 14). It is evident from the usage that **hell** refers to the grave. Taken in context, these verses describe the time when the dead shall be raised and judged. It is interesting to note that those in "hell," the grave, are dead—not alive and suffering torments.

Verse 14, the last use of the word **hades** in the Bible, assures us of the ultimate destruction of the Bible hell. "And death and hell [hades] were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death." If the theory of hell as a place of burning were true, then we literally have hell cast into hell! How ridiculous! The "lake of fire" is here used as a symbol of the end of death and the grave, its absolute destruction. The "lake of fire," the "second death," destroys all the incorrigibles at the end of the thousand years and it is then that "there shall be no more death."

Reprints of these studies are available upon request.

THE SABBATH

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

The Law Gave Temporal Benefits

Neither the punishments nor the rewards of the Mosaic law extended beyond the mortal lives of the children of Israel. Obedience to that law promised no future rewards, and disobedience threatened no future penalties. Why? It was a national, civil law given for a national, civil purpose. It was a "ministration of death, written and engraven in stones" (II Cor. 3:7). If men disobeyed the law, they suffered its immediate penalties. If they obeyed the law, they prospered in children and lands and temporal advantages.

The Original Law Was Superior

When Jesus was asked, "Which is the greatest commandment of the law?" He answered: "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind. This is the first and great commandment. And the second is like unto it, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets" (Matt. 22:37—40).

Here are two commands which Jesus classes as superior, and "on these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets." Neither of these is in the Decalog; but the Ten Commandment law hangs on this higher, superior law.

The Mosaic Law Founded on the Higher

The Mosaic law was founded on the principles of the higher law. Jesus directly affirms this: "On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets." Every principle of the Mosaic law is

found in the higher, eternal law of God. Therefore, the law of Sinai is in no way superior; it was only a "shadow" of higher realities (Heb. 10:1). For example, it demanded sacrifice; but in a spiritual sense, "God's sacrifice is a soul with its evil crushed" (Ps. 51:17, Moffatt). But Moses' law was only an outward form of law. It did not govern the motives and intents of the heart.

Or take the command: "Thou shalt not covet." Under Moses' law, this applied only to material possessions; but covetousness as defined by God's higher law is the equivalent of idolatry (see Col. 3:2, 5).

Limitations of the Mosaic Law

It could not make perfect. "For the law having a shadow of good things to come, and not the very image of the things, can never with those sacrifices, which they offered year by year continually, make the comers thereunto perfect" (Heb. 10:1).

It could not take away sin. "And every priest standeth daily ministering and offering oftentimes the same sacrifices, which can never take away sins" (Heb. 10:11).

It could not give life (eternal life). Paul makes this point clear in Gal. 3:21: "Is the law then against the promises of God? God forbid: for if there had been a law given which could have given life, verily righteousness should have been by the law." But *neither righteousness nor life* come by obedience to the law of Moses. "The letter killeth, but the spirit giveth life" (II Cor. 3:6).

The law of Moses was given for the temporal benefit and temporal prosperity of the Israelite nation; it was not designed or intended to be perpetual.

(To be continued next issue)

Timely Topics

In these days when women undress boldly and clothing manufacturers promote mini-minis (or as termed in the Fiji Islands, micro-minis) in full-fashion advertisement and fabric so sheer as to expose the human form, the Biblical commands regarding modest apparel become ever more meaningful. Paul's plea to the church in Rome, "Be not conformed to this world" becomes a lifeline to save the striving Christian from a sea of faddism and immorality. And the first letter to Timothy discloses a command of absolute necessity: "Women for their part are to dress modestly and sensibly in proper clothes, not adorning themselves by braiding their hair or with gold or pearls or expensive clothing, but, as is appropriate for women who profess to be religious, with good actions" (I Tim. 2:9, 10, Goodspeed).

Debasing Dress

Modern America leads the world in technology, but she falls far short of progressiveness in moral standards. Indeed, a few small, scarcely recognized nations in Africa put our vastly more prosperous nation to shame. Kenya, Ethiopia, Zambia and other countries have sternly and severely denounced the modern miniskirt. Kenya's defense minister calls it "an affront to the dignity and purpose of African society." According to the Malawi News, "Proper dress is necessary for the moral health of the nation." In Zambia, some militants have taken matters into their own hands, using razors to let down hems—and right in the streets! (And America sends miniskirted missionaries to Africa! Africa might better send some missionaries to America, and send their razors along with them!)

One of the most prosperous civilizations of the ancient world, indeed one of the richest civilizations ever known, was that of ancient Crete. Protected by the sea and its navy, the people reveled in splendor. Theirs was a kingdom filled with silver, gold, ivory and jewels, and served by slaves. Archaeologists marvel at its brilliant art and its labyrinthian palace at Knossos (the most pretentious in Greek prehistory), with bathrooms, ventilating systems, water conduits and waste chutes, and call

this civilization of the second millennium B. C. "modern."

In its luxury it turned to entertainment. Acrobats amused these easy-going people by facing a charging bull, grabbing its horns and somersaulting over its back! Pictures reveal others engaging in wild, drunken parties.

As this modern society degenerated, clothing became minimal. The Cretans grew sex-crazy; women sported in elaborate hair-dos, fancy jewelry, and sheer fabric and tightly clinging garments, while men were miniskirted.

Their religion further corrupted them. The appearance of their gods and goddesses would make a decent person blush. The chief deity was the Great Mother (predecessor of the "Virgin Mother of God").

The Cretan civilization ended with such suddenness and completeness that historians are amazed. How could such a rich and cultured nation perish so completely? In about 1500 B. C. it is believed an earthquake and tidal wave destroyed their navy, leaving them open to invasion by the Greeks. This was followed by an invasion of barbarians in 1150 B. C., who burned Crete's palaces and houses. And so they perished, like every nation that forgets—or fails to recognize—Almighty God, and lets affluence destroy its morals.

At the moment, God is silent. But the prophet of God still thunders: let us hear!

"Because sentence against an evil work is not executed speedily, therefore the heart of the sons of men is fully set in them to do evil" (Eccl. 8:11). The word of God is immutable: The "wages of sin is death" (Rom. 6:23). Suddenly—and soon—these wages will be paid. Christ the King will flash into our world with the vividness and reality of lightning. And in that day, whatsoever a man has sown, "that shall he also reap" (Gal. 6:7).

Christians today—men or women—must heed the urgent warning of the Revelator: "Come out of her [Babylon], my people, that ye be not partakers of her sins, and that ye receive not of her plagues" (Rev. 18:4). ●●

Real delight in life does not consist in giving in, but in getting over.

Optimist or pessimist? Some people can even make lead float, while others will see their straw sink.

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

"Doesn't Rev. 22 say there will be more than one nation after the Kingdom has been set up? It reads, there was 'the tree of life, which bare twelve manner of fruits, and yielded her fruit every month: and the leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations' (v. 2)."

No, this verse does not say there will be more than one nation in God's finished Kingdom. After all the nations are healed, there will be only *one* nation. As the prophet Daniel described the populace of that better day, "The kingdom and dominion, and the greatness of the kingdom under the whole heaven, shall be given to the people of the saints of the most High, whose kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, and all dominions shall serve and obey him" (Dan. 7:27). The "people of the saints of the most High," composed of members from all the nations that formerly inhabited the earth, will form one new nation.

"May I ask you to explain Luke 4:40. It says the devils 'cried.' It must be wrongly translated, for it conveys the meaning that the devils that came out of them cried and talked."

In the Gospels, diseases are often spoken of as devils, being opposed to a healthy state of the physical system. This is especially true in the case of mental diseases, as the case where Jesus healed the insane man by infecting the herd of swine with the mental derangement, causing their destruction by drowning. When the people came to Jesus to see what had happened, they saw the man who was possessed with the devil "sitting and clothed, and in his right mind" (Mark 5:15). We should observe that this insane man also was keen enough to cry out and say to Jesus, "What have I to do with thee, . . . thou Son of the most high God?"

It must have been the demoniacs themselves that did the crying out, for the diseased condition of their minds would have no voice with which to speak.

"Will the coming of Elijah be man's last chance to repent?"

The coming of Elijah will be the beginning of a series of events which will terminate man's opportunity to repent, but his coming alone will not end

that opportunity. Revelation 14:1 depicts the Lamb, Christ, with His 144,000 approved ones standing on Mt. Sion. The Judgment has been accomplished, the true Bride, or Church, identified, and His work of cleaning up the earth is ready to begin in earnest. Elijah's mission will have been accomplished some time before.

In Rev. 14:6, 7, a further warning is to be given: "And I saw another angel fly in the midst of heaven, having the everlasting gospel to preach unto them that dwell on the earth, and to every nation, and kindred, and tongue, and people, saying with a loud voice, Fear God and give glory to him: for the hour of his judgment is come."

Before anyone is cut off in the Battle of Armageddon, he will be fully informed as to what the new government and law is to be, and will be told how he can escape destruction with the workers of iniquity. And we have every reason to believe that that process of education and warning will be continued as long as there are any pockets of resistance remaining, until resisters have had opportunity to amend their ways and submit.

With the completing of Armageddon and the dawn of the Millennial Day, only those who have surrendered to the new order will remain. The word to the seething sea of humanity will be, "Hitherto shalt thou come, but no further: and here shall thy proud waves be stayed" (Job 38:11).

"I wish to make reference to the text, Psalm 34:7. 'The angel of the Lord encampeth round about them that fear him, and delivereth them.'"

"I have given serious thought regarding that text, and often I wonder if it is not taken out of context, applying it to the present times. To me it seems it has reference to the last days of God's judgment, wrath and reward, for it appears that even in the days of the Apostolic Age, many died a martyr's death. Many times the righteous are victims, and the wicked survive. Sickness and accidents befall both.

"Do not think that I am losing faith, but am trying to reason on these logical principles. I think that on the Day of Judgment the righteous shall fear no evil to befall them, for they shall have the angels encamping round about them. In that day of trouble and great wrath, the righteous shall be delivered."

You are right. In the great time of trouble, the righteous will be delivered. Joel 2:30, 32 speaks of this time of trouble, and of the deliverance arranged for those who call upon the name of the Lord. "And I will show wonders in the heavens and the earth,

(Continued on page 25)



BEE POLITE

Politeness is to do and say the kindest thing in the kindest way.

Politeness means kindness, yes and more than that. A polite person is never rude. This story is about two children who were stung by Bee Polite just once—but they never forgot it.

Daisy and Dan were twins. When they were babies, their mother took them from their home in the East to live in a far western state. They could not remember their grandmother, who still lived back in the old home town. All they knew about her was what their mother had told them; and she often wrote long letters, and sent them lovely presents.

One day they received a letter from Grandma, saying that she was coming to spend a few weeks with them. They could hardly wait for the Thursday to come when she was to arrive at the station.

The train was due at six o'clock in the evening, and Mother promised the twins that they might go to meet Grandma.

After school she sent them to the store to buy some things for supper.

Now there were some children living in the neighborhood who were very rude. For this reason the twins were never allowed to play with them. But today, on their way to the store, they met these children, and all went on together.

They crossed a vacant lot, where there was a pile of crushed rock. Near the rock pile, they met an elderly woman carrying a small satchel. She spoke kindly to them; but one of the boys answered her very rudely, and then stuck out his tongue at her. The lady turned to him and said, "My boy, you need someone to teach you how to be a gentleman."

"Oh, do I?" said the boy roughly. And picking up a stone from the rock pile, he threw it at her. Another lad did the same, and still another.

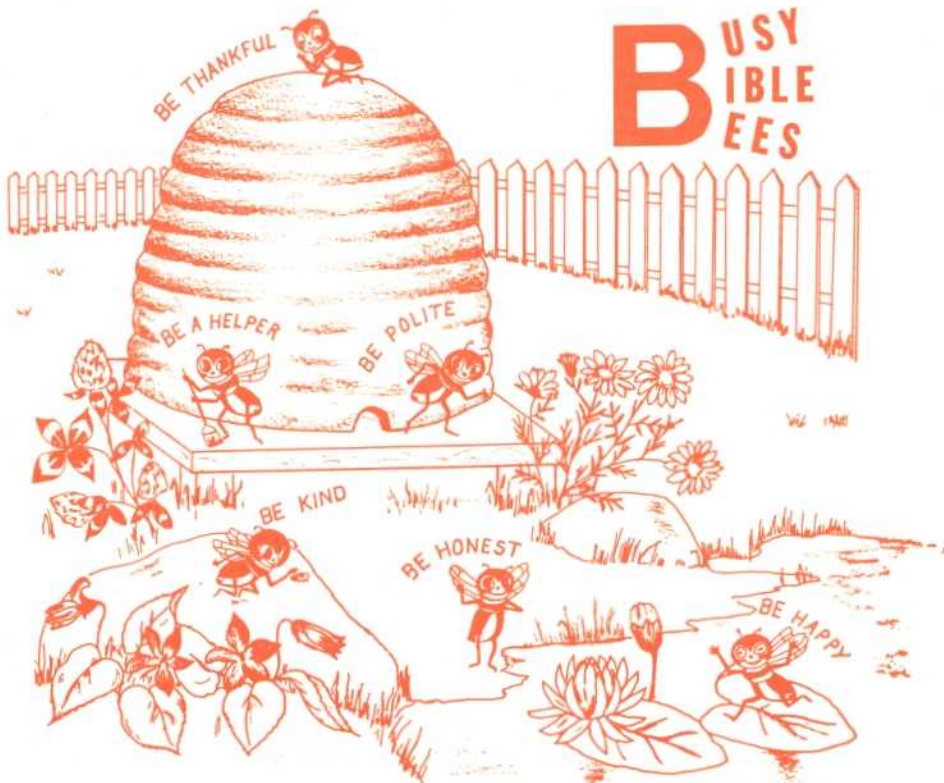
Now the twins had been

taught to be polite—especially to old people. Just now little Bee Polite began to buzz about them. But when children are in bad company, it is always hard for them to hear the small voice of conscience. For a moment they stood and watched the boys throw rocks at the old lady; and then they began to throw them too.

No matter how hard she tried, Daisy could not throw a stone straight. But Dan had a better aim, and he threw a rock which struck the old lady's hand.

When the twins reached the store, there were several customers ahead of them; so they had to wait their turn. It was nearing supper time when they came out of the store with their bundles. The rude boys had waited outside for them all that time.

When Daisy and Dan reached home, they were very much surprised to find a visitor there. It was the old lady whom they



had treated so unkindly. Mother was crying as she bathed the hand that had been hurt by Dan's rock.

"Children," she said, "this is your dear grandmother who has come to see you. She came on an earlier train than she expected; and she inquired the way, and walked out from the station alone. Some rude children treated her very unkindly on the way. You will have to be very good to her, to make up for it."

"Well, well," said Grandma kindly, "is this Daisy and Dan? I should never have taken them to be my grandchildren."

The twins expected her to add, "So you are the naughty children who threw stones at me." But she did not say it; and Daisy and Dan hurried out of the room as quickly as they could.

So the good times the children had expected to have with their grandma were spoiled in the very beginning. After that, whenever they went into the room where she was, they felt very uncomfortable.

"I don't understand why the twins act so strangely," said Mother one day, as she and Grandma sat mending together. "I am really ashamed of them. They had planned to do so many things to make you happy during your visit. But they seem to keep away from you all they can."

Daisy, who was passing outside just under the window, heard every word distinctly. Her heart pounded like a hammer; and she held her breath, to hear what Grandma would say.

Grandma went on mending, without saying a word. "Dear Grandma! She won't tell on us for throwing stones at her," said Daisy to herself. "Then I'll tell, that's what I'll do!" she added with a sob.

An instant later, Mother was surprised to see the little girl dash into the room with tears running down her cheeks. She threw herself down by the chair and laid her head in her mother's lap, crying so hard that for a moment she could not speak.

"There, there little girl," said Mother, "what has happened? Tell Mother all about it."

Then Daisy told the whole story. When she had finished, she threw her arms around Grandma.

"I'm so sorry, dear Grandma!" she cried.

Just then Grandma looked up and saw Dan standing there. He had come in so softly that no one had noticed.

Grandma held out her hands to him; and he burst into tears. "It was my fault, lots more than Daisy's," he sobbed. "I threw a stone before she did; and besides, it was my stone that hit your hand."

Grandma talked to the twins for a long time, then, in her own quiet way. She told them that children who were in bad company were almost

sure to do wrong; and that polite boys and girls usually grew up to be the best men and women.

"I know that such a thing will never happen again," she said, kissing them both; "so now it is all forgiven and forgotten."

But the twins could not forget. Two or three weeks later, Grandma went home. She still wrote letters and sent presents, just as if nothing had ever happened. But for many years—long after Daisy and Dan had grown up—every time they thought of their dear grandmother, they felt the sting of their rudeness and cruelty to her.

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Children, have you learned to be polite to everyone? If not, now is a good time to start. It is a pleasure to have a polite boy or girl around, but a child who is rude and disobedient is a source of sadness. You know, politeness can mean so many different things. As mentioned at the beginning of our story, politeness is kindness. Politeness is also obedience and cheerfulness. It means to say "Please," "Thank You," "Good morning," "Good night," "Excuse me," and sincerely mean the words when we say them.

Dear children, the poem below, "Golden Keys" is a good one to learn and remember. It will help you to be more polite. Memorize it, and then practice it every day. It will help you be a little lady or a young gentleman.

Golden Keys

A bunch of golden keys are mine,
To make each day with gladness shine.
"Good morning," is the golden key
That unlocks every day for me;
When evening comes, "Good night," I say
And close the door of each glad day.

When at the table, "If you please"
I take from off my bunch of keys;
When friends give anything to me,
I use my little "Thank you" key;
"Excuse me," "Beg your pardon," too,
When by mistake some harm I do.

Or if unkindly harm I've given,
With "Forgive me," I shall be forgiven;
On a golden ring these keys I'll bind,
This is its motto, "Be ye kind."
I'll often use each golden key
And then a child polite I'll be.

Hearts, like doors, open with ease,
To very, very little keys.
And don't forget that two are these,
"I thank you, Sir," and, "If you please."

The Fallacy of the Scarlet Thread

(Continued from page 6)

accepts: "The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit: a broken and a contrite heart, O God, thou wilt not despise" (Ps. 51:17).

And this sin offering was made on our behalf as well as on His own. Christ "learned obedience by the things which he suffered [this assured His own salvation]; and being made perfect, he became the author of eternal salvation unto all them that obey him" (Heb. 5:8, 9). His sin offering was on "our behalf." And it is because of the completeness of His offering and the salvation it brought Him that we have been granted the hope of eternal life. He is our perfect example (I Pet. 2:21), and the Judge from whom we, if faithful, shall receive salvation (Phil. 3:20, 21). To us He is the author and the only author of eternal salvation.

Christ's Death, According to Scripture

Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures. To the evangelical theologian, I Cor. 15:3, 4 seems to teach the doctrine of the sacrificial death of Christ, the scarlet thread. These texts, as translated in the RSV read: "For I delivered to you as of first importance what I also received, that Christ died for our sins in accordance with the scriptures, that he was buried, that he was raised on the third day in accordance with the scriptures."

As has been said, Paul, in trying to set forth the reality and meaning of the hope which he and others had found in Christ, seized on any possible metaphor suggested by His environment and used any terms made available by the thought patterns of his day. Thus he seems to suggest that Christ offered on our behalf the sufficient sacrifice which we could not offer, or that He won a victory over our natures which we could not win alone. While it would be a mistake to suppose that Paul regards all of these representations as mere figures of speech, if we had asked him, he would almost certainly have agreed that some of them were intended more literally and realistically than others. In other words, he would not have wanted us to take all of them literally.

As other passages of Scripture quoted within Scripture suggest the application of a single statement to more than one situation (Acts 4:25, for example); it seems possible that I Cor. 15:3 could have both a literal and a figurative application—both in accordance with the teachings of the Old

Testament and the rest of Paul's own teachings.

"Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures." It is obvious that Paul is speaking first of Christ's physical death and triumphant resurrection. That Jesus died, that He was buried, that He rose the third day, is well-authenticated history.

Christ's physical death was according to the Scriptures. It was an event of much divine foreknowledge. Even many of the details of the crucifixion were mentioned by the prophets (Ps. 34:20; 69:21; Zech. 11:12, 13). All this was God's foreknowledge, and occurred as He had said.

But the salient import of the crucifixion was the resurrection, also a matter of divine prophecy (Job 19:23—27; Ps. 16:9, 10).

I Corinthians 15 was written to affirm, establish and teach the fact of the resurrection of Jesus, and to strengthen the hope of the resurrection of all believers. "Now is Christ risen from the dead, and become the firstfruits of them that slept. . . . But every man in his own order: Christ the firstfruits; afterward they that are Christ's at his coming" (vs. 20, 23).

Christ's physical death demonstrated the power of the resurrection. And this was Paul's mission—as for every other to whom the revelation of the risen Christ had been given—to preach the gospel of the resurrected Lord. Christ had died and risen, and they were witnesses of the resurrection. The death on the cross was the prelude to the resurrection, the ascension, and the glorification of the Master, and to the more glorious Day when He shall return to reward every man "according to his works."

But Paul said, "Christ died for our sins." What could there be in Christ's literal death that would have anything to do with *our* sins? Many people believe that Christ's literal death was a propitiatory sacrifice to free us eternally from the penalties of sin. However, is this Scriptural? Is this the meaning Paul intended to convey, or merely a part of the fallacy of the scarlet thread?

Could Christ's literal blood cleanse us from sin, when Jesus said, "Now ye are clean through the word which I have spoken unto you" (John 15:3)?

If Jesus' death accomplished the most essential part of our work, what did Jesus mean when He said, "Whosoever heareth these sayings of mine, and doeth them, I will liken him unto a wise man" (Matt. 7:24)?

Or, if His blood purified and cleansed us, why did John say, "Every man that hath this hope in him purifieth himself, even as he [Christ] is pure" (I John 3:3)?

Again, if Paul were convinced that Jesus' death

was a sacrifice to free us from the penalty of sin, why should he have commanded us to work out our "own salvation" (Phil. 2:12) or to be "careful to maintain good works" (Titus 3:8).

If Christ died in our stead, why should Paul have told us to crucify the "flesh with the affections and lusts" (Gal. 5:24)? Why should he have prescribed as the cure for stealing, "Let him that stole, steal no more"? or as a remedy for lying, "Speak every man truth with his neighbor" (Eph. 4:28, 25)?

"Christ Died for Our Sins"—How

The Scriptures state positively that to be acceptable to God we must be pure, spotless, cleansed from every defilement of sin. Paul himself says that we must be dead to sin: "Likewise reckon ye also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord" (Rom. 6:11). We must be free from sin; but did Paul teach that Christ was the means? Could Christ's literal death accomplish the work which we must do to crucify "the flesh, with the affections and lusts" (Gal. 5:24)?

"Christ died for our sins." Paul did not say that He died that *we* might not die for our sins. He did not say that He died to atone for our sins; but He died "in behalf of our sins" (*Wilson's Emphatic Diaglott*).

Christ's physical death on the Roman cross was "in behalf of our sins," in that it showed His complete submission to the will of the Father. In submitting to physical death, He completed His spiritual death, His moral death, the death of His own will and desires; showing us that if we will submit to the will of God as completely as did He, even to the crucifixion of every way of our own—even to physical death, if that be necessary—we, like Christ, shall merit immortality.

When Christ obediently suffered physical death, when His life ended, He had already completed the greater and far more important crucifixion—the death of His will, the death which Paul says we all must die: "Be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God."

And this moral death was according to the Scriptures, as Peter understood them: "For even hereunto were ye called: because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that ye should follow his steps" (I Pet. 2:21). If the death spoken of here were literal death, it would then be necessary for each of us to die on a literal cross as did Jesus, to maintain good works" (Titus 3:8).

Christ died as an example, not as a propitiatory sacrifice. He ruled and conquered Himself; He suf-

fered the death of His own will—a sacrifice which began with His first act of obedience and ended with His last—the giving of His life before He would deny the truth that He was a King. And this same death we must die: "Likewise reckon ye also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin." Christ crucified His own nature; and only after we have suffered this same moral death will we merit the better resurrection to life immortal.

How then did Christ die for our sins according to the Scriptures? When Paul spoke of Christ's sacrifice according to the Scriptures, he must have been referring to the Old Testament Scriptures, as these would have been the only Scriptures in existence at the time. Some of the letters forming the body of the New Testament had not yet been written. Even the Gospels were not widely circulated, and it was not until many years later that the Epistles now forming the New Testament were assembled into book form.

Paul, in speaking of Christ's death according to the Scriptures, could not have been thinking of the literal death of Christ as a sacrifice to save us from our sins, as there is no text in the Old Testament Scriptures which actually says this. However, he could have had in mind Christ's death of His own will—a death that will benefit us as an example, and that is according to the Scriptures: "Sacrifice and offering thou didst not desire; . . . burnt offering hast thou not required. Then said I, Lo, I come: in the volume of the book it is written of me, I delight to do thy will, O my God" (Ps. 40:6—8). "Lo I come," said He, "TO DO THY WILL," and this purpose He fully accomplished.

The apostle Peter was much closer to the source of the teachings of the Old Testament than anyone living these days. Here is how he understood Christ's death according to the Scriptures: "For even hereunto were ye called: because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that ye should follow his steps" (I Pet. 2:21).

The words of the prophet Isaiah may have been in Paul's mind when he spoke of Christ's dying according to the Scriptures. But does Isaiah 53 depict Christ's suffering individually? Does it picture Christ's physical death on Calvary? It is true Christ suffered literal death. But more important than this, He suffered the death of His own will during His entire lifetime among men. And in submitting to physical death He completed His death to sin. "In that he died, he died unto sin once" (Rom. 6:10).

The servant of Isaiah 53 does not refer to Christ individually, neither does it exclude Him. Each

yet we must suffer the loss of many things that are near and dear to us; we must suffer the hard speeches of the worldlings who do not care for the narrow way.

Paul entertained no vain hope that all the work had been done for Timothy or for others of the early church, but he made it plain that he believed there was a work for each to do. He wrote: "It has been said, and said truly: If we have died with him, we shall live with him; if we endure, we shall reign with him; if we deny him, he too will deny us; if we are faithless, he remains faithful, for he cannot deny himself."

Beloved ones, let us die to ourselves; let us die to every interest that could reduce our chances of winning life in the world to come. Let us keep our minds fortified with the dynamic influence of God's saving grace in our hearts. The days are swiftly passing; one day soon our day for growing strong in God's grace will be ended. Let us act like wise men, not like thoughtless. Let us make the very most of our time, for these are critical days. ● ●

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MEGIDDO MESSAGE

member of His body or Church must suffer with Him; each must become a part of the "suffering servant": "It is a faithful saying: For if we be dead with him, we shall also live with him: if we suffer, we shall also reign with him." "For unto *you* it is given in behalf of Christ, not only to believe on him, but also to suffer for his sake; having the same conflict which ye saw in me, and now hear to be in me" (II Tim. 2:11, 12; Phil. 1:29, 30).

In Summary

To summarize: "Christ died for our sins, according to the Scriptures." He died on Calvary—not in our stead, not as our sacrifice, but—in our behalf, for our benefit, as our example; for the strengthening of our faith. In submitting to physical death, and thus to His Father's will, He completed the crucifixion of His own will, and fulfilled His responsibility of providing a perfect example of holiness to His Church. By His death He showed us how completely we must submit to God's will; if we would merit His supreme blessing, we, like Christ, must offer the supreme sacrifice.

Christ died victoriously and rose triumphantly—to the glory of a sublime exaltation in His Father's presence. And now He waits the Day of coronation when He shall be crowned King of kings and Lord of lords; for, declared He, "To this end was I born; for this cause came I into the world."

A Challenge

Let us consider again Paul's challenging remarks in II Timothy 2. The chapter begins, "Thou therefore, my son, be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus. . . . Thou therefore endure hardness as a good soldier of Jesus Christ." Among people of military prowess the soldier has always stood as the model of unhesitating obedience, of perfect loyalty, of single-minded and heroic devotion, and of the ultimate of self-sacrifice. It is these virtues which are transferred to the realm of the spirit in the phrase "a good soldier of Jesus Christ."

One of the newest of the new versions words these verses from Paul, "Fortify your life with the dynamic influence of that grace which enters life, when Christ Jesus becomes the atmosphere in which we live.... Like a good soldier of Christ Jesus join the company of those who are prepared to suffer for their faith."

Let us see to it that Christ Jesus becomes the atmosphere in which we live. Let us fortify our lives with the dynamic influence of that grace which enters life when we are strong in the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ. The active Christian these days does not have to suffer physical persecution for his faith.

LETTERS

Questions and Answers

(Continued from page 19)

blood, and fire, and pillars of smoke.... And it shall come to pass, that whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be delivered: for in mount Zion and in Jerusalem shall be deliverance, as the Lord has said, and in the remnant whom the Lord shall call."

However, the context in which Ps. 34:7 occurs doesn't seem to especially picture the time of trouble. Furthermore, the point that you make, that the righteous are not always delivered, does not actually disqualify the promise of Psalm 34:7. God doesn't always deliver.

There are a number of statements in the Bible which if linked together show the divine plan. John 7:17 reveals that anyone who will do God's will shall know of the doctrine, shall be provided a knowledge of the law of God. First Timothy 4:8 gives the promise of enough of this life in which to accomplish the work. "For bodily exercise profiteth little: but godliness is profitable unto all things, having promise of the life that now is, and of that which is to come."

From these texts we learn that anyone who will do God's will shall know of the doctrine, know what to do, and that such a one is assured enough mortal life in which to accomplish the work. The important part of our life's work is to prepare for life eternal. Once this is accomplished, our chief purpose for living is fulfilled. But God to be true to His Word would not have to supply us with any stipulated number of years. He promises enough life to accomplish the work.

John the Baptist was one of the greatest of God's spokesmen. Jesus praised him very highly as a man of character, and recognized his outstanding work; yet his life terminated in its thirtieth year. In relation to eternity, our present life is as a drop in a bucket, hence our important work is to fit ourselves for future life.

Viewing the question from this angle, we might say the angel of the Lord encamps about those who fear Him and delivers them until they have had time to finish their work. Beyond this there might be no need for their lives to be extended, hence the encamping angel might not deliver. Furthermore, we have no assurance of the use of two eyes, two ears, two hands, two feet to the very end of our day of life; but we do have the promise of enough life and physical faculties to accomplish our work, and to this end the angel of the Lord encamps and delivers.

(Continued next page)

Appreciative

I enjoy the *Megiddo Message* very much. It is greatly refreshing to pick up a magazine with no beer or cigarette ads.

I never found anything before that has made the Bible so clear to me, and I have been a Bible student since 1940.

Wichita, Kansas

M. W.

Mind Potential

The mind is the sprouting bed for noxious weeds. Bad thoughts are our worst enemies. They are worse than lions and tigers, for we can keep out of the way of wild beasts; but bad thoughts win their way everywhere unless and until an effective weapon (II Cor. 10:4, 5) is vigorously used at all times.

The cup that is full will hold no more, so we should keep the mind full of good thoughts. Then the bad thoughts can find no room to enter.

All that a person does outwardly is but the expression and completion of his inward thoughts. To work effectually one must think clearly. To act nobly, one must think nobly. Thought engenders thought. One cannot fathom the mind. It is a well of thought that has no bottom and is the chamber where that old serpent which is the devil and Satan will be confined under chains for a thousand years (Rev. 20:1-3).

Ft. Lauderdale, Florida

G. W. S.

In the Coming Days

We don't know what the coming days will bring, except that each day will have twenty-four hours for us to use. No doubt many minutes of each day will be misused, but that is up to us. Sometimes we misuse time through carelessness, sometimes because we don't know how to use it to best advantage.

It is important that we try always to be on guard to take advantage of every opportunity to show where we stand. If we don't try to improve ourselves as time goes on, we will go backward. There is no such thing as "time enough yet."

So let's go to work determined that we will use all our strength and energy to work for God and Truth, so that our faith will increase and our example will be a help to others.

The Christian life is a constant warfare. And sometimes we are not sure what is right. But if we do what we think is right, governed by the Word of God, that will be far better than doing what we know is wrong.

Adamsville, Tennessee

Mrs. J. P.

Enlightened

I thank you very much for sending the magazine, the *Megiddo Message*. As I read the wonderful articles and look up the Scriptures, I've been enlightened and feel I'm having a closer walk with the Lord. We surely do need the help your magazine gives in our Christian growth. I look forward to each magazine and go over the articles many times.

May God continue to bless you in the work you are doing.

Rockford, Illinois

B. P.

"I feel guilty for not writing to you before to thank you for your magazine. It is very instructive and counseling. Please carry on to send it to me, as I wish to pass it on.

"I pray that the power of the Holy Spirit will soon descend upon us to bring all to our knees in conviction and conversion before it is too late and the enemy has come upon us. God's Word is true, and He has promised He will pour out His spirit upon all flesh. What does this truly mean?"

We are with you in your hope that the Holy Spirit will soon be felt among the people of the earth, bringing about an improved condition here. We are certain this will be accomplished at the return of the prophet Elijah to earth as the forerunner of Christ Himself. We are also convinced that the time for the beginning of these outstanding events is near. Soon our Lord will be here.

Jesus promised definitely: "Elias truly shall first come, and restore all things" (Matt. 17:11). The Holy Spirit will be one of the services that he will restore.

And then shall be fulfilled the words of the prophet Joel, quoted by Peter on the day of Pentecost: "And it shall come to pass in the last days, saith God, I will pour out of my Spirit upon all flesh: and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, and your young men shall see visions, and your old men shall dream dreams: and on my servants and on my handmaidens I will pour out in those days of my Spirit; and they shall prophesy" (Acts 2:17, 18). • •

Meditations On the Word

(Continued from page 27)

world, many of whom would never be missed. It is also true that no man, be he ever so significant, is indispensable, which is fortunate in view of our mortality. Certainly the work of the world has been done in the past—but by whom? Not by the philosophers of gloom but by people who got busy and *made* themselves needed. The world *has* to have people like that. While the quitters were wailing of their own futility, *they* were working, and happy in their work because they had found their place in this great scheme of things.

God needs us, humble and inadequate though we may be. That is, He needs us if we will make ourselves needed. The Plan of the Ages cannot operate without us; or someone to take our place. It depends on and consists of human integers—not

ciphers, but integers. The "why" of it is none of our business, but it is our good fortune. We certainly could not better the Plan. The Eternal needs men and women of exactly the right type, a type which does not exist in nature but which can be developed from the raw material which exists in each of us. It is a compliment of the highest order that we have been called into this work; it shows we have it in us, if we will develop it. God will have His men, regardless of time. He can wait; He has waited nearly six thousand years for men and women He needs to rule in the age to come. God will have His men, regardless of our success or failure, just as the world's work will be done, regardless of the attitude of the masses. If we fail, we injure ourselves most of all. The Eternal's need is not so great that He will accept sub-standard materials.

Yes, brethren, we are needed. We *can* be important. There is so much we can do, here and now, to help others and prepare ourselves for the great change so soon to come. If doing our work well there will be no time for moods of depression. After all, the cure of every evil is *faith*. The germ and root of every good thing is *faith*. Let us have faith that God is using us to His glory, and let us so employ our days and hours that this need will continue, that throughout eternity we may be in union with Universal Life, belonging to Him, having a part in His purposes, being a trustee of His commissions, having access to His available power and sharing His glory, world without end. The world and worlds yet uncreated will always need us if we are faithful workers, for there will always be work to do. "Men wondered at," the Prophet called these needed individuals (Zech. 3: 8). This is a dignity, an importance, a significance worthy of investing our lives in.

"No man is useless while he has a friend," said a famous writer. True as regards this life, but how much more significance it lends to our existence to have Jesus for our Friend! We can have Him, but there are conditions: He chooses His friends with care. "Ye are my friends, if ye do whatsoever I command you" (John 15:14). No man worthy of the name would betray or disappoint his friends. May we not fail the Friend who has made us stewards of His wonderful, saving Truth.

May the Lord depend on you? • •

*Poor is the life that is all pleasant weather;
Sunshine is brightest just after rain.
Bitter and sweet must mingle together—
Hard is the heart where no sorrow has lain.*



Meditations

On the Word

WHILE living in this world of change and uncertainty in a time like this, surrounded by a universe almost too vast for us, beholding from our detached position the play of titanic forces and the swift unfolding of mighty events, with nothing we can do about it, we must guard against a distorted perspective. We must watch lest we accept our personal insignificance in this great scheme of things as a fate rather than a challenge, lest a sense of futility and uselessness overpower us and we mutter, "what's the use?" This mood is as old as it is destructive. More than two hundred years before Christ a Jewish sage recognized its dangers and warned against it in these words:

"Say not, who shall remember me from on high? In such a multitude I shall not be known, for what is my soul in such an immense creation?"

This poses a fair question, and one which cannot be answered without consideration. Just what is our soul in this immense creation? For how much do we, as individuals, count—or do we?

In the first place, it would be well for us to come down to earth and keep our feet on the ground, so to speak, in our thinking. It is necessary to think on high and edifying things, but there is a point beyond which our finite minds cannot go, and it is useless and confusing to try to force them to comprehend the infinite. Like the Psalmist (131:1), we shall find it unwise to exercise ourselves in things too high for us. Our world is small, it is true, yet we know little of it, and if we master the problems it presents in this life we shall do well. Let us learn to master the global before undertaking to fathom the cosmic. If we serve well in our sphere, we may safely leave the rest to God.

Jesus never bewildered His hearers with intricate philoso-

phy or flights of fancy into the infinite, but his illustrations and parables were of familiar, homely things, such things as our minds can lay hold of. A stranger to metaphysical speculation, He nevertheless knew the mind of man better than the greatest of worldly psychologists, and He fitted His gospel to its abilities and its needs. "The Word was made flesh"—eatable and assimilable. He recognized the fact that "the sense of uselessness is the severest shock which the human organism can sustain"; which is but another way of saying that "lack of something to feel important about is almost the greatest tragedy a man can have."

The desire to be or feel important, one of the strongest drives in human nature, is not in itself ignoble. In fact, when properly used, it is a highly desirable and even an indispensable characteristic. Without it, no one would deny himself the satisfactions of this world to gain the greater glories of the world to come. This lawful desire moved the Master Himself. For the joy that was set before Him He endured the cross and despised the shame; and that joy was a position of importance, a throne. Throughout His ministry He was always laying His hand on unlikely people, saying, You are needed, and so awakened in them a transforming respect for the importance of their own lives. No longer were they a jumble of atoms, lost in a universe too big for them, but integral parts of a divinely planned whole.

God wants us to have a good opinion of ourselves—but we must deserve it. We can be kings and priests for eternity, or we can be less than nothing

and vanity; the matter rests entirely in our own hands. It is perfectly true that there are many useless individuals in this

(Continued on page 26)

"Also I heard the voice of the Lord, saying, Whom shall I send, and who will go for us? Then said I, Here am I; send me" (Isa. 6:8).

Faith

What if I say--

"The Bible is God's Holy Word,
Complete, inspired, without a flaw"--

But let its pages stay
Unread from day to day,
And fail to learn therefrom God's law?
What if I go not there to seek
The truth of which I glibly speak,
For guidance on this earthly way--
Does it matter what I say?

What if I say

That Jesus is the Christ;
Yet fellow-pilgrims can behold
Naught of the Master's life in me,
No grace of kind humility?
If I am of the shepherd's fold,
Then shall I know the shepherd's voice
And gladly make His way my choice.

We are saved by faith, yet faith is one
With life, like daylight and the sun.

Unless they flower in our deeds,
Dead, empty husks are all the creeds.
To call Christ, Lord, but strive not to obey
Belies the homage that with words I pray.