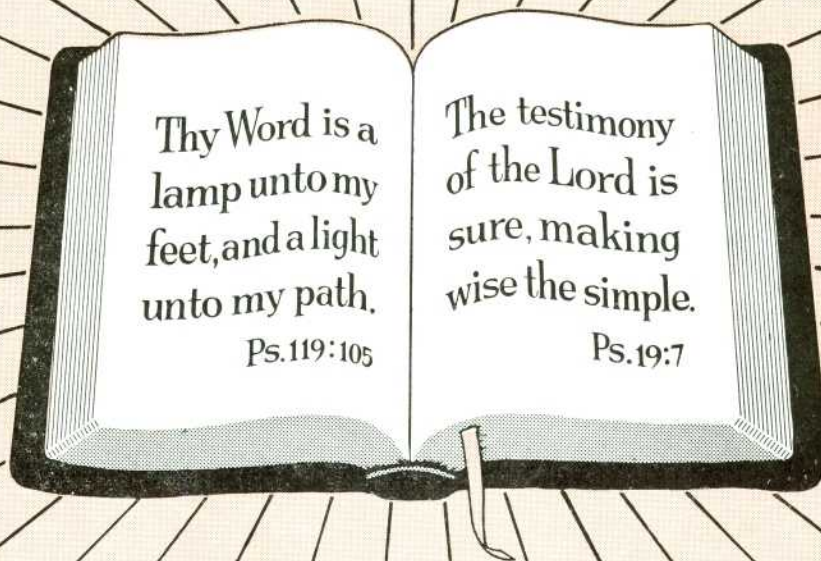


# Megiddo Message

DEVOTED TO THE CAUSE OF CHRIST



## What Are You Concerned About?

The Golden Calf--Aaron's Weakness

Understanding the Bible

In the Context of Eternity

# 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 Sinfulness of Sin

ONE OF the greatest of all tragedies is that of the man who has lost the sense of the sinfulness of sin. How pathetic is the life that has no clear-cut convictions of right and wrong.

Lest we find ourselves drifting into this fateful condition, let us open our eyes wide to see our lives in their true perspective. We will never banish sin until we learn to hate it, and, like the Saviour of men, learn to love righteousness and life. And we will never hate sin until we see its hideous nature.

Sin is more than a cold, lifeless term. It is a deadly virus that poisons and destroys. There are too many prophets in our modern age who try to heal "the hurt of the daughter of my people slightly, saying, Peace, peace; when there is no peace" (Jer. 6:14). There "is no peace, saith my God, to the wicked." There is no peace for the human heart until sin is eradicated, for peace and sin cannot dwell together.

Sin has an ugly history. Behold what it has done! It kept a host of Israelites wandering forty years in the Sinai wilderness until they could learn obedience to law and submission to God. Sin prevented Moses' entering the Promised Land, though he ultimately triumphed over its assaults and will enjoy his share in the eternal Land of Promise. Sin in the heart of King Ahab took the life of the innocent Naboth. The sinful Judas betrayed the Master into the hands of wicked men.

Sin is deadly, and it will take our lives if we allow it to remain in our hearts. How do we expel it?

First, heed the words of God's prophet: "Cast away from you all your transgressions, whereby ye have transgressed; and make you a new heart and a new spirit: for why will ye die, O house of Israel?" (Ezek. 18:31).

Among the early Christians was the church of Laodicea. Though attempting to maintain an appearance of prosperity, they were spiritually destitute. In His letter to them, Jesus tried earnestly to impress them with the seriousness of their sin: "I know thy works, that thou art neither cold nor hot: I would thou wert cold or hot. So then because thou art lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will spue thee out of my mouth.

"Because thou sayest, I am rich, and increased with goods, and have need of nothing; and knowest not that thou art wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked" (Rev. 3:14-17). They were lukewarm, indifferent to the real issues they should be facing.

What was the remedy? "I counsel thee to buy of me gold tried in the fire, that thou mayest be rich; and white raiment, that thou mayest be clothed. . . . As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten: be zealous therefore and repent" (Rev. 3:18-19).

Let us look inward to ourselves as we echo Jesus' words: "Be zealous, therefore, and repent." That means a right-about-face, a complete change of attitude and direction. Put Egypt behind you; turn around and go God's way. ●●



# What Are You Concerned About?

## PRAYER

Our kind heavenly Father, Thou great and mighty Being to whom all flesh must come; this morning brings us under renewed obligations to thank and praise Thee for Thy great goodness and mercy to us; that in a world filled with dangers we have until this hour been kept secure and unharmed. We rejoice that we have been given Thy Word as a lamp to our feet and a light to our path to guide us to that heaven of eternal rest; that we have Thy great and precious promises as an anchor to our souls sure and steadfast, and the stabilizing influence of a lively hope to keep us on an even keel through every storm.

Grant, Father, that our eye may be single, that our interest in winning the great eternal future which Thou hast promised may be the first and uppermost consideration in our lives. May we not be too concerned with what we shall eat or drink, or wherewith we shall be clothed, always aware that the well-being of the new life is more vital than our daily food, and the health of the body of the new man of greater consequence than the acquisition of the finest clothing. Help us to live above the level of the people of the world about us who make food and drink their aim in life, forgetting that Thou knowest they have need of these things, and that they must be kept secondary. The invisibles are the realities, and the intangibles are the permanencies. May we then set our affections on things above, assured that if we seek first Thy kingdom and the righteousness that will fit us for it, every needful thing will be provided.

Be with Thy people wherever they are, with all who are striving to learn and live Thy glorious precepts; with those in sickness or trouble, and those who have not our privilege of constant assembly; and may we see Thy hand in all the affairs of life, and always say, "Thy will be done!" Forgive us for the sins we have turned from and forsaken, and may we never look back, but press with all our might and strength toward the mark of the prize, for Thine is the kingdom and the power and the glory for ever. Amen.

## DISCOURSE

**F**ROM THE time the infant cries for milk, through the carefree years of childhood and the responsibilities of middle age until the feet of the aged stumble on the dark mountain of death, every man is concerned about something. Health, wealth, honor, power, position—his concern may reach to a thousand and one matters. Multitudes tug and toil for things that last but one brief day, seeking for that which they shall never find; hoping for that which they shall never know. Many a father and mother have worn away their lives in concern for the welfare of their children. Scores of persons have labored unceasingly through wearisome years to obtain a home they could call their own. Then at the very hour when it was within their reach, death came quietly stalking to their door, and their lifelong dream was left for another to inhabit.

The foremost concern of Alexander the Great was to conquer the world, and history records that he wept when there were no more worlds to conquer. Columbus' great concern was to reach the shores of another land that he fully believed lay beyond the broad expanse of uncharted sea, and he lived to see that longing desire fulfilled. Admiral Byrd spent the great portion of his life in deep concern over what he might see and discover in the wide waste of the polar regions; but he died a disappointed man because he did not have the honor of setting his feet where the compass shows no direction. The glory that might have been his was given to another. When a mere youth, the French astronomer Flammarion would lie on the ground for hours as he marveled at the glory of the heavenly bodies. He gave his entire life to concern over what he might discover about those far-off planets which move in constant precision through the heavens. But he went to the silent tomb ignorant of the true meaning of all their glory.

### Needless Concern

When the rich young ruler came to Jesus,

his chief manifest concern was to seek the way of salvation. But our Master soon revealed to him that his greatest concern was not the heavenly Kingdom but his riches, and he went away sorrowful when he thought he had to part with them.

Saul's great concern was to destroy David. He plotted, he schemed, he hounded him at every step; but with all his strategy he could not prevent the anointed from becoming king. So it will be when Christ the Anointed, the David after God's own heart, comes to rule the world in righteousness in that auspicious Day; all the Sauls with evil eyes will sit and unite together to destroy Him, but they will utterly fail, for He was born to be a King.

Thousands are more concerned about other people's business than their own. Many are concerned over little things and overlook the greater and weightier matters. They burden themselves with trivia which is a detriment to their efficiency and creative power. So burdened are they with useless things that they lose sight of their objective in life.

Other people are more concerned with the government and the management of others. Time fails to tell of the great host of politicians, kings, potentates and ecclesiastical divines whose great concern is to rule and govern others, but who cannot and will not rule themselves.

#### Martha's Concern

Let us now ask ourselves: What is our longing desire? What is our great concern? What are we interested in? What are we seeking?

Ponder seriously the lesson taught by Jesus one day at the home of Martha and Mary in Bethany. Martha was much cumbered. She was hot and tired; she felt flustered and driven; her patience was sorely tried and there, in the very presence of the Master Himself, it broke through to the open view of thousands who would after read of her mistake.

Those of us who know the multiple tasks of earning a living, taking care of our homes, and providing for the physical needs of our families and ourselves can share in Martha's rebuke from the Lord. Too often our temporal duties have occupied first place in our hearts' concerns, while our spiritual welfare has been pushed aside because of lack of time. The task of maintaining

*What is our longing desire? What is our great concern? What are we seeking?*

our existence is a complex and time-consuming one, to be sure. Still, there must be time for the more important spiritual duties or there will be nothing more for us to hope for beyond these temporal tasks. That is all we shall have.

But perhaps we are one who is not making the obvious mistake that Martha made. Perhaps our time is wisely managed so that we spend only the least necessary time on our physical needs and devote a generous portion of the day's hours to God's service. This is good. Yet when this step is taken, we may still be in danger of becoming much cumbered, too careful, too troubled, too concerned with outward acts of service while neglecting the weightier matters of the law of God.

"Do not go to so much trouble to get a nice supper for me, Martha. I want to tell you about the Kingdom." Hear His gentle reproof and appeal. "Something simple will do just as well, Martha. Come and sit down and let's talk."

Is it possible to go to too much trouble for the Lord? There was nothing wrong with Martha's motive. She wanted everything to be nice for the Lord. All her elaborate preparations were for Him. Yet she was reproved.

And what of us? We certainly want to give the Lord our very best. But the little incident at Martha's house that day seems to teach us that it is possible to be too concerned about many things which are not necessary. Jesus would remind us that all our activities in the Lord's work are but a means to an end—to perfect holiness. They must not become an end in themselves. When we become overly anxious, tired and flustered over the thing we are doing, our Master's kind and thoughtful words should reclothe us in our rightful mind: "Stop your frenzied rushing and come, relax. Give your deepest concern to the one thing that really matters."

#### Vital Concern

Jesus taught the same lesson in the parable of the Great Supper. Said our Master, "A certain man made a great supper. . . . And sent his servants at supper time to say to them that were bidden, Come, for all things are now ready." When our King returns, He will spread a great supper for all who are worthy to partake. And now He is preparing invitations. Not just written invitations, but personal ones. Think of it! The opportunity is knocking at your door. You are invited to a wedding feast where the truly noblest ones of earth will partake. Have you received the invitation? Are you concerned about it—deeply concerned? Are you making ready your garment to attend, or are you one who started right in to be

excused and turned the heavenly servant away?

Many are the minor and secondary interests which men present as excuses for not attending the great feast. One might say, "I have just bought a piece of land, or a summer campsite, which I am very anxious to see. I want to test out the land and make certain improvements. This will take so much of my time." Another might say, "I have just bought a new powerboat. I want to see how she takes to the water. Please have me excused." Still another, "I have bought some new fishing tackle and am anxious to try it. They say it handles the big ones with no trouble. Have me excused." Another answers, "I am working on a hobby of my own. I am so anxious to get it completed. Please excuse me for the present." Excuses can come thick and fast.

When the servant in the parable came to report to his Lord concerning the reception he had had, did the Master say, "Hurry back and plead the harder with them. They may change their minds"? No! What was the answer? "Such men shall never partake of My supper. Go quickly out into the streets and find the lame, the halt, and the blind. Find those who are aware of their infirmities and are really anxious to be restored to spiritual health. I will make room for them, but those unthankful ones with all their excuses shall never sit down at My table. They have received the one and last invitation they will ever get. They were not at all concerned with the great event; neither am I longer concerned with them" (paraphrased from Luke 14: 16-24).

### The Concern of God's Great Men

Oh, that we might today catch the spirit of the apostle Paul! We have not the least trouble seeing what concerned him. "For I am persuaded that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord." "Brethren, I count not myself to have apprehended: but this one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before, I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus." "But none of these things move me, neither count I my life dear unto myself, so that I might finish my course with joy, and the ministry, which I have received of the Lord Jesus, to testify the gospel of the grace of God" (Rom. 8:38-39; Phil. 3:13-14; Acts 20:24). Such a noble character will surely have a place when the faith-

*The task of maintaining our existence is a complex and time consuming one. Still, there must be time for the more important spiritual duties or we will have nothing more.*

ful of all ages sit down to partake of the marriage feast of the Lamb.

See Paul bidding farewell to the Ephesian elders as he knelt down to offer his last prayer before his departure. What was his great concern? Listen to his sorrowful words: "Therefore watch, and remember, that by the space of three years I ceased not to warn every one night and day with tears." Is this your concern and mine?

The concern of the beloved John was that his children be found walking in obedience to God's truth: "I have no greater joy than to hear that my children walk in truth" (III John 4).

The patriarch Jacob, leaning on his staff, blessed the two sons of Joseph concerning things to come. His mind was set on the future. What of ours? Where is our concern? Are we leaning on the staff that comforts us and looking forward with the eye of faith to the great things God has promised, or are we keeping our eye centered on the fleeting things of the present?

### Where Is Our Concern?

In the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus taught several lessons on the seriousness of placing our concern on the things that matter least.

"Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon earth, where moth and rust doth corrupt, and where thieves break through and steal: but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust doth corrupt, and where thieves do not break through nor steal: for where your treasure is, there will your heart be also" (Matt. 6:19-21).

Here is a thought we cannot deny: wherever our treasure is, there will our heart be also. Our Master is comparing two things: the temporal, and the things from heaven; the things of this life that pass away, and the life and joy and beauty and happiness of eternal things. In the ordinary everyday management of life it is simple wisdom to purchase things which will last, things which have quality and permanence. That is exactly what Jesus is saying here: Concentrate on the things which will endure.

Jesus' similes of the moth and the rust are

*(Continued on page 22)*

# Thoughts

## of Present and Future

There may be some who say—  
Oh! in what way  
Can such a life as mine is, glorify  
Our heavenly Father,  
Or be a reasonable sacrifice?  
What can I gather  
To fit me for His kingdom, whiles that I  
Must work, and toil, and struggle day by day,  
And scarcely wrest  
My daily reading from my needful rest;  
Troubled like Martha, though my dearest choice  
Would be to listen to the Master's voice?

Oh, when I stand  
On Sunday on the hilltop, as it were,  
And get bright glimpses of the far-off land,  
While the fresh breeze  
Of goodly exhortation lifts the screen  
Of mist that gathers on the hills between,  
And with the Word supreme  
I feed on things divine,  
And earthly things seem blotted out of sight,  
In that great light  
That shows the truth a rock—all else a bubble.

Ah me! no trouble  
Would seem too hard to bear at times like these.  
Yet though my heart has thus within me burned  
And leaped to reach perfection, I have learned,  
All of this earnest purpose will not stay,  
When to the actual duties of the way,  
Down into weekday valleys I must go

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### The Master's Spirit

A famous stained-glass craftsman told the story of a young apprentice who came to borrow the tools of a master craftsman. "What do you want the tools for, Son?" the older man asked.

"Oh, I just want them to see if they will make any difference in the work I do," replied the young man.

And meet the little things that vex me so;  
Get "put upon" and "worried,"  
Perplexed, beguiled, surrounded every way  
By things that seem not to have much connection  
With Godward aspiration  
And apostolic exhortation.  
Here is a heart for light and glory crying;  
Here are dull, dusty duties round me lying;  
What shall I do, to reconcile the two?

Just stop and think:  
These are the pens and ink  
With which you write that daily book  
Wherein the Lord will look  
In the great Day of our examination.  
Christian, remember,  
These are the thorns with which you have to fashion  
A crown of sweet compassion,  
That, knowing how they prick, you may refrain  
From giving others pain.  
To bear the cross with Christ and with Him die  
Is still to crucify  
Each natural thought and act,  
And daily dying, daily live again.

Sharp irritations,  
Being overlaid with patience,  
Will make fair pearls for your most meet adorning;  
And in the morning  
The stinging and the smart will fade away.  
Then, be a grain of sand, or cross, or thorn,  
In patience to be borne,  
Still let us, by all means, to attain  
The resurrection joy that fadeth never.  
And when thy crown is fashioned and the stain  
Of thy last, lingering fault is purged away,  
Perhaps the Lord will bid thee go thy way,  
Rest from thy labors till the appointed day  
When thou shalt rise and stand  
At His right hand,  
And having won the strife  
Put forth thine hand unto the tree of life,  
And eat and live for ever!

---

A week or so later the master craftsman walked into the boy's presence and inquired: "Well, Son, how are you doing?"

"Not so good, Master," he replied, "not so good! In fact, my work is no better than it was—even with your tools."

A mature and gray-haired old artist overheard the conversation and said to the young man: "Son, it isn't the tools of the master you need, it's the master's spirit!"

"Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus" (Phil. 2:5).

# Timely Topics

**T**ODAY, as always, mankind is concerned about life. Scientists have learned a great deal about this most miraculous of all qualities. Plant life, animal life, insect life, human life—all have been studied as thoroughly as man has known how to go about it. Through the use of medical knowledge, ways of prolonging life have been discovered. But in our modern world, some are questioning how long life can exist under present conditions. Man has abused life on the earth so thoroughly that he is now fighting to try to save it. Pollution of and misuse of our natural environment has taken its toll.

## Pollution Control

The very air we breathe has been so polluted that it can irritate the eyes, and is a factor in causing or worsening such diseases as the common cold, lung cancer, chronic bronchitis, emphysema, and asthma. The automobile has been one big reason for the contamination of the air, so much so that auto companies are now trying to produce low-pollution engines fueled by lead-free gasoline.

So much industrial waste has been dumped into our water supplies that they are anything but pure. The government is in the process of re-examining the country's drinking-water standards. The effect of heavy metals has endangered fish, which, of course, are used for food. Many products used daily by the modern housewife cause more harm to the water supply. Pollutants which have been dumped into the Great Lakes over the years have hastened the aging process of these lakes. There is a floating mat of algae in the center of Lake Erie.

We, as Christians, do not like to see this beautiful earth desecrated and devastated by man. We respect our world as being evidence of the handiwork and existence of an Eternal Creator, and we naturally are interested in the place which we look forward to obtaining as our eternal home. We would not deliberately undertake to do anything which would add to the destroying of our planet.

But while we would do all within our power to preserve nature, yet there is another kind of pollution which should concern us more at this point:

that is, the pollution of *self*. We know that the coming of Elijah and the second advent of Christ will usher in the Millennium, during which time pollution of the earth will be cleaned up, and the land restored to a beautified condition. However, it is not only the literal pollution of the world which will be eradicated after Christ's return. No evil will be allowed in that new Day, and so spiritual pollution will also be abolished. And if we would desire to enjoy life on the earth after it has been made over new, we must now be about cleaning up our own characters. We must be pure and clean, with no polluting sins left to endanger our prospects of eternal life. "Blessed are the undefiled in the way, who walk in the law of the Lord" (Ps. 119:1).

What are the besetting sins that pollute our characters in the eyes of God? They have been enumerated again and again—anger, impatience, envy, malice, evil speaking, hurt feelings, thoughts that are not governed by the Word of God, etc. All these we must rid from our personalities to become spiritually unpolluted. If left, they will daily cause more harm, and it will take that much longer to free ourselves from their influence.

Our program for cleaning up our individual lives must be enforced daily, and with determination. As in the natural each individual must do his part in making for a cleaner environment, so in the spiritual each of us must do his part in making the entire body pure and undefiled. We must not abuse our lives, but fight now against every pollutant which would enter in to contaminate us, and so become worthy of having our lives prolonged, even throughout eternity. ●●

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I watched them tearing a building down,  
A group of men in a busy town.  
With a ho heave ho and lusty yell,  
They swung a beam and a sidewall fell.  
I asked the foreman, "Are these men skilled?  
The men you would hire if you had to build?"  
He gave a laugh and said, "No, indeed,  
Just common labor is all I need,  
I can easily wreck in a day or two  
What builders have taken years to do."  
I thought to myself as I went my way,  
Which of these roles have I to play?  
Am I a builder who works with care,  
Measuring life by the rule and square?  
Am I shaping my deeds to a well-made plan,  
Patiently doing the best I can,  
Or am I a wrecker who walks the town  
Content with the labor of tearing down?

# Blending A Tasteful Life

## *Advice from the Kitchen—*

**O**FTEN when following a recipe and preparing a dish, I am reminded how very similar is the way my life is put together. Some of the ingredients of a recipe aren't very tasty in themselves. There isn't any appeal in taking a spoonful of flour into your mouth, or pepper, baking soda or shortening. Any one taken alone can hardly be called a wonderful taste experience. But when blended in right proportions and subjected to the process of cooking or baking, the result may be a pleasurable taste experience plus nourishment.

Isn't that the way with the events and experiences in our spiritual lives? Some in themselves seem rather hard to swallow. They are not pleasant to the taste. We don't accept them very readily.

Realizing how human nature despises these needful ingredients, James admonished: "When all kinds of trials and temptations crowd into your lives, my brothers, don't resent them as intruders, but welcome them as friends! Realize that they come to test your faith and to produce in you the quality of endurance." James never suggested to the Christians to whom he wrote that Christianity would be for them an easy way. He warned them that they would find themselves involved in divers temptations, trials and testings difficult, but all directed toward an end; that he who is tested should emerge stronger and purer for the testing. Trials are for strengthening, purifying, proving and testing. On the Christian way we must expect to be jostled by trials.

There are other ingredients which in themselves will seem distasteful. There will be the test of sorrows and disappointments which may seek to shake our faith. There will be the sacrifices and the unpopularity which the Christian way so often involves. But the whole point of these is to remember that they are not sent to make us fall; they are sent to make us soar. They are not sent to defeat us; they are sent that we may defeat them. They are not sent to make us weaker; they are sent to make us grow. We cannot despise these necessary ingredients; we must learn to exult and rejoice in them.

Another unpleasant but essential ingredient is reproof. Until we have developed a large measure of spiritual maturity, reproof is a most unsavory

and bitter ingredient. Wrote the author of Hebrews: "Discipline always seems for the time to be a thing of pain, not of joy; but those who are trained by it reap the fruit of it afterwards in the peace of an upright life." If we could but see in the hard things of life the disciplining of a loving Father, the bitter would become sweet. For the true Christian knows that whatever comes to him is from God, who is a Father, and that a father's hand never will cause his child a needless tear.

Everything He allows to come to us is designed to make of us a wiser and better person. If we keep this in mind, we shall cease from self-pity, from resentment and from rebellious complaint; for there is no discipline from God which does not find its source in love, and which is not aimed at good.

Too often the proffered help of a friend is not very tasty to us. The kind and helpful words are rejected as an intrusion into our business. We feel we are being picked on or criticized, forgetting that those with our interest at heart never speak to irritate, find fault or make us uncomfortable. Their only desire is to help us blend that satisfying, "tasteful" life.

Many times a recipe calls for ingredients that have been stirred or beaten, even grated or chopped. And it is so in our spiritual lives; there is the constant rub and friction of daily life, an ingredient often so distasteful. Is there someone in our lives who tries and vexes us? Is there someone near to us who is faultfinding and unreasonable, ready always to put the worst construction on all we try to do and say? Does everything that person says or does bring out the worst in us? If we could but realize this very situation is an ingredient which can add richness and flavor to our lives, we would thank God for such a person. Someday we may actually long for these very trials to help us accomplish the spiritual work which is now so distasteful to us.

The Christian is like the athlete. The heavier the burden the athlete's trainer lays upon him, the more the course of training is intensified, the more the athlete recognizes his worth; for he knows that all is fitting him for the more strenuous and victorious effort.

The aim of testing is to purge from us all im-

(Continued on page 24)



# THE SABBATH

## The Law "Established"

If Paul believed the law of Moses was no longer in effect, why did he say, "Do we then make void the law through faith? God forbid: yea, we establish the law" (Rom. 3:31)?

Sabbatarians quote this text to support their position that the Sabbath is binding. But this assertion directly contradicts Paul's words in verse 28: "Therefore we conclude that a man is justified by faith without the deeds of the law." How, then, can obedience to the law of Moses be essential?

Faith does not make the law void, says Paul; it establishes the law. How is that? If God had said justification came by the law, then for a man to be justified by faith alone without the deeds of the law would make void the law.

However, as we have seen, justification never came by the law. The law was only added to a superior, existing law. And it was added only for a limited time: "Until the seed should come." When the seed, that is, Christ (Gal. 3:16), came, the law ended. It ceased because it had reached its natural end—not because faith made it void. Its termination in Christ established the fact that the law had been added for a special time and for a special purpose; and having served that intended purpose, it ceased by limitation. It ceased because its end had been reached. We might compare the law of Moses to a state law that prohibits deer hunting for six years. At the end of six years the law would cease, not because a new law was passed but because it had reached its time limit.

The termination of the law of Moses was the fulfillment of an ancient hope in the coming of Christ. The old, however, was not to be condemned or taken lightly, for it was the foundation of the new. In the new Gospel all the insights and undersandings of

May, 1972

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 centuries were "established." "Do we then overthrow the law by this faith? By no means! On the contrary, we uphold the law" (Rom. 3:31, RSV).

## From Sabbath To--WHAT?

WITH the end of Christ's ministry the Sabbath—as well as the rest of the old law of Moses—was gone. What was the result?

Such a change naturally brought reaction. Those who had all their lives respected and honored the law of Moses did not change easily. The Sabbath abolished—how did they feel about it? Were they now free from all restraint and obligation?

Let us first remind ourselves of a point already established: that the law of Moses was merely "added" to an already existing and superior law of righteousness; that it was only "hanging" on a greater and more significant law of faith and obedience (Matt. 22:35-40; Jas. 2:8-10), and when the "hanging" was removed, it in no way affected the original law.

As we have seen, the law of Moses from Sinai was only a national law founded upon the principles of God's higher moral law; and when it ended, it in no way changed God's law. We will quote an illustration of this fact from H. M. Riggle:

"The State law of Michigan forbids murder, theft, and adultery. In these items it is founded upon God's moral law. Now abolish the law of Michigan. Does that abolish God's law? No. So with the state law of Israel. Neither its enactment on Sinai nor its abolition at the cross in any way changed God's great moral law by which He will judge the world."\*

To be sure the scattered churches understood this fact, Paul mentioned it more than once in his

\* H. M. Riggle, *The Sabbath and the Lord's Day*, p. 68.

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not fulfill the lust of the flesh. For the flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh: and these are contrary the one to the other: so that ye cannot do the things that ye would. But if ye be led of the Spirit, ye are not under the law. Now the works of the flesh are manifest, . . . and they that are Christ's have crucified the flesh with the affections and lusts" (Gal. 5:13-24). Far from being freed from moral responsibility, they now had to crucify every lust of the flesh and "walk in the Spirit."

### Who Changed The Sabbath?

Seventh-day keepers assert that the "pope" or the "Catholic Church" changed the Sabbath from Saturday to Sunday. We quote from a current Adventist publication:

"The change from the true Sabbath to the false sabbath was brought about by the great apostasy in the early church which crystallized into the Roman Catholic system. The reasons that prompted this apostate movement to discard the Sabbath of the Lord and adopt the day of the sun worshipers were principally twofold: namely, a desire to avoid being identified with the Jews, whose bigotry and downfall had made them unpopular; and an equally strong desire to win the pagan sun worshipers and gain their adherents to the church."<sup>†</sup>

When did this change from Saturday to Sunday occur? Sometime during the third and fourth centuries, according to the Adventists.

Before we proceed with this subject, let us clarify one point: Saturday was a day as sacred to Saturn worshipers as Sunday was to the worshipers of the sun. If the Catholic hierarchy compromised with pagan custom in setting aside Sunday as a day of rest, they changed it from an equally pagan day—Saturn's day (Saturday).

Let us establish one more point: Sunday, or the first day of the week, could never be the Sabbath of the Lord. Here the Sabbatarians have "found a handle for their teachings in the erroneous way the Christian churches speak about the first day of the week, as if it were the Sabbath."<sup>‡</sup> The law was given to Israel, to be observed by Israel, and was figured according to their laws of counting time. The Roman calendar being different, the Sabbath as given to the Hebrews through Moses and the Sunday of Constantine could not coincide consistently, any more than the Sabbath of the law of Moses could align with the Roman Saturday. And furthermore, any action taken by any human authority could in no way change a day that had been given by God to ancient Israel. Sunday *was* not and *is* not the Sabbath.

(Continued Next Issue.)

letters. The abolishing of the law of Moses did not mean freedom from all law; on the contrary, it meant a deeper obligation to law, the law of Christ.

Paul, says in Romans 6: "Ye are not under the law, but under grace. What then? shall we sin, because we are not under the law, but under grace? God forbid. Know ye not, that to whom ye yield yourselves servants to obey, his servants ye are to whom ye obey; whether of sin unto death, or of obedience unto righteousness? But God be thanked, that [though] ye were the servants of sin, . . . ye have obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine which was delivered you. Being then made free from sin, ye became the servants of righteousness" (Rom. 6:14-18). Freedom from the law of sin and death only meant that they were servants now to the law of righteousness.

In Galatians 5 Paul teaches the same truth; Christians have been freed from the restrictions of the law, but this does not mean they are free to do as they please: "For brethren, ye have been called unto liberty; only use not liberty for an occasion to the flesh, but by love serve one another. . . . This I say then, Walk in the Spirit, and ye shall

<sup>†</sup> Carlyle B. Haynes, *From Sabbath to Sunday*, p. 31.

<sup>‡</sup> William C. Irvine, *Heresies Exposed*, p. 163.

# The Golden Calf--

## Aaron's Weakness

WHILE THE Bible gives us many examples of right conduct and valiant heroism, it also points out the weaknesses which have led the unwary into temptation and transgression. Unforeseen circumstances may have arisen in their lives which required greater moral strength than they were prepared to demonstrate.

Such was the case of Aaron and the golden calf.

Let us review the narrative, restricting ourselves to the practical lessons which we can derive and not seeking to expose or demean Aaron's character; for from the record of His life we know him to have been an inherently good and God-fearing man.

Older than Moses by three years, Aaron does not always appear to advantage in the sacred narrative. This may be partly owing to the pre-eminent greatness of his brother, whose brightness of character outshone the lesser endowments of Aaron; but it is due mainly to his own imperfections. Of ready and eloquent speech, he seems to have been pliant and flexible in disposition. His nature was receptive, rather than creative. He floated on the current which others formed and rarely, if ever, made a torrent which swept all opposition before it. He would have made a masterful leader in time of peace, when all was going smoothly; but when sudden emergency arose, when there was mutiny to be quelled or idolatrous madness to be repressed, he proved unequal to the occasion and yielded, against his better judgment, to the demand of the multitude. He feared to oppose the wishes of the people; and the spark, which a moment's firmness might have trodden out, became a mighty conflagration in which thousands were consumed.

By not using all his strength to suppress the first suggestion of idolatry, he soon was caught in a situation utterly beyond his power to control. Had he resisted the first appeal from erring Israel, he could have prevented the evil. And even if he could not have put down the idolatrous revolt, he could have restricted its progress by uncompromising opposition. But failing, his conduct was condemned not only by Moses but by the messenger of God Himself: "And the Lord was very angry with Aaron to have destroyed him: and I prayed for Aaron also the same time" (Deut. 9:20).

Since this same "fear of man" which brought a snare to Aaron is a human trait still entangling some among ourselves, and since many who would never think of originating evil promote it by yielding weakly when it is proposed by others, we should consider further this phase of character.

In the first place, wrong is always wrong. This may seem a simple truth, but think on it. When men offer excuses for their evil deeds, they often blame difficult circumstances which made it unavoidable; in other words, as they were situated, it was not wrong for them to do wrong. No doubt Aaron felt this way. He did not think for a moment that idolatry is not sinful; but the whole drift of his reply to Moses is that his making the golden calf was, as far as he was concerned, a thing unavoidable. He could not help himself. Abstractly considered, it was certainly unwise and improper. But in the state of affairs at the moment, it could not have been avoided. Thus Aaron would have Moses believe that the image was no fault of his.

Here is a vivid illustration of self-deception. Another such instance was the case of Herod. His whole soul revolted from the crime of putting John the Baptist to death. He knew that it was murder; but because of a rash oath which he had sworn, and because of the men by whom he was surrounded, he tried to persuade himself that it was the unavoidable; or, in other words, that it was not wrong for him to do wrong. The same may be said of Pilate, who feared to refuse the people when they demanded the life of the Saviour.

But we need not go back into history for examples of people who think they are right in doing wrong. The family who is ruined by reckless extravagance, and declares that it is necessity because they must keep up appearances; the merchant who relies on dishonorable expedients; the many tracks of deceit to gain one's end, save one's face or reputation; the lies, black, white and medium, which serve to get one out of an embarrassing position—all are in the same category with Aaron. While acknowledging that they are wrong basically, they do, at the same time, attempt to justify themselves; that is, they believe that it was not wrong for *them*—at that time—to do wrong.

However, morality is not a changing thing, dependent upon fluctuating circumstances. There is no possible situation where wrong can become right. Turn away from all but what God says is right and fix your attention on one thought: "This is wrong," and therefore it must be wrong in all places, in all cases, and at all times. And then, in the face of temptation you will exclaim, "How can I do this great wickedness and sin against God?"

But because of the deceitfulness of the human heart, we invariably strive to divert attention from the main issue and instead think about the advantages that will result from yielding to the enticement, or on the disadvantages of the opposite course. However, this is the wrong approach to handling temptation. Our sole concern should be to do right; that accomplished, we shall have effectively resisted the temptation and whatever evil consequences may follow.

Again, we must remember that no one can compel us to sin. Sin is a voluntary action, and no external force can constrain us to commit it. We cannot do wrong until we choose to do it, and the choosing is a free act of our own will. A free act—that is, something we might have refrained from if we had pleased.

But someone may object: "Suppose my life would have been in danger had I refused; what then?" Even in such a case the choice is voluntary. After Aaron had allowed the passion of the people to gather strength, there might have been some personal danger in standing against them; yet a small measure of firmness on his part at the outset would have effectively controlled them. But no man, no set of circumstances can justify sin. It is always wrong to do wrong. Remember, "God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it" (1 Cor. 10:13).

Aaron's fault lay in not taking swift action in suppressing the evil. Had he possessed his brother's promptitude and courage, he would have reminded the people of what they had so lately seen and might have diverted their minds into some other channel. But he temporized, until the current was too strong for him: and then, carried in it himself, he weakly said that he could not help himself against such a formidable array.

Recall what took place on Mount Carmel when the false prophets and priests of Baal accepted the challenge of Elijah. To human view, the Tishbite was a minority of *one*; and if he had quailed, a glorious opportunity would have been lost. But see how, as he stands firm and proves his case, the peo-

ple take courage and shout, "Jehovah he is the God, Jehovah he is the God."

The consequences of wrongdoing are always more serious than the wrongdoer at first supposes. Aaron might have thought that making and worshipping a golden calf would not, in the long run, matter much to the people. Truly it was wrong, he knew, but Moses would soon be back among them and he would remedy the evil effects. But the great transgression resulted in the death of three thousand of the people!

Every sin is a hideous and abominable thing to God, fraught with pernicious results to ourselves, and in most cases, to others also. When Achan hid the wedge of gold and the Babylonish garment in his tent, he never imagined that for his transgression Israel would be defeated by their enemies and many people be put to death.

Let us not imagine that if we commit sin, the consequences will be slight. We can imagine Aaron bitterly upbraiding himself for his weakness when he saw the fatal fruits of it, but it was too late then to repair the wrong.

Let it be ours to guard against all such after-reproaches by resolutely refusing in all circumstances to commit iniquity ourselves, or to encourage it in others. Rather, let us follow that which is good, even our perfect Guide and Example, walking closely by His side where we may find safety and protection from all that is evil. ●●

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## Words to WALK By

Good intentions will not help a man on his way if he takes the wrong road.

*If you are too busy to pray you are too busy.*

If a man can't be a Christian in the place where he is, it is quite certain he can't be a Christian where he is not.

*It is all right to have your own way—provided that you have accepted God's way as your way.*

You can often judge a person's patience by the pitch of his voice.

*If one is right at the center of his being, he will be right at the circumference.*

When a man keeps all his blessings to himself, he loses the greatest one.

*A genuine Christian is the best evidence of the genuineness of Christianity.*

You must first be a believer if you would be an achiever.

# UNDERSTANDING THE BIBLE

"Study to shew thyself approved unto God."

## The Trinity

OF ALL the false doctrines extant in the world today, probably none is more widely accepted by all faiths, both Catholic and Protestant, than that of the Trinity. It is considered a central or cardinal doctrine of the Christian religion; a doctrine of great importance, "a bulwark for Christian theism."

Theologians and laymen alike acknowledge that the word "Trinity" does not appear in the Scriptures, but they insist to a man that it is implied, even definitely taught by the Bible. It is admittedly "above reason, and cannot be comprehended in its depth and fullness," yet it supposedly is "not opposed to reason."

Writes a contemporary Doctor of Divinity: "Devout and careful Bible students throughout the church centuries have been convinced that the plain teaching of the Bible is that in the unity of the Godhead there exists a Trinity of coequal Persons."

"The doctrine of the Trinity is superior to human reason. It is one of those truths that must be apprehended, although by our finite wisdom it cannot be fully comprehended. It is difficult to illustrate this truth. We can only confine ourselves to the statements of God's Word and believe them, whether or not we can explain them."

Obviously the doctrine is shrouded in mystery. Dissertations and explanations on the subject are often ambiguous, replete with such phrases as "Implicit rather than explicit"; "transcending finite comprehension"; "may be deduced from the Scriptures"; "a deep mystery"; numerous passages are said to "point to the dogma"; and it is said to be a "doctrine to be accepted by faith," or as stated above to be "apprehended" rather than "comprehended."

In spite of its incomprehensibility the doctrine is still widely acclaimed in our modern age where almost everything else has to be provable to be believed. Infants held in their mothers' arms are baptized "in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost"; children, long before

they reach the age of understanding, repeat the words parrot-like; and nominal churches throughout the world sing the familiar hymn, "God in three Persons, Blessed Trinity."

We take the position that the so-called "Trinity" is unscriptural, that no doctrine of the Bible is superior to human reason, that God's Word can be understood if properly studied. True, man is finite, and God infinite, but He does not shroud His truth in deep mystery. The words of Moses, (repeated by Jesus, the Son of God) are too plain to be misunderstood: "Hear, O Israel: the Lord our God is one Lord" (Deut. 6:4; Mark 12:29).

We will study the doctrine, its origin and its history, giving proof that it is the doctrine of men and not of God, following our outline:

- I. What is the Trinity?
- II. The Origin of the Trinity
- III. Proof of a Trinity According to Theology

Does a "Trinity of coequal Persons exist in the Godhead"? If a doctrine cannot stand the test of "prove all things," it is not a part of God's Truth. We will, however, give the matter careful study, following the Bible rule of "comparing spiritual things with spiritual," relying on the unerring Word of God.

## WHAT IS THE TRINITY?

As before stated, it is difficult to propound a lucid definition of the Trinity since believers in the doctrine also claim to believe in but one God. It is evident that such a belief was not held by the early church since the term does not appear in the Bible; hence our definition of the word must come from secular sources.

### A. Trinity Defined

The **Encyclopedic Dictionary** defines Trinity as "A threefold consubstantial personality existing in the one divine being or substance; the union in one God of Father, Son, and Holy Spirit as three infinite persons."

A contemporary theologian attempts an explanation thus: "It follows that, since relationship in



God is God, and since there are three related Persons in God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit, then each of them (although related to each of the others) is God too. This confirms the truth of the mystery of God, One in nature but three in Persons. Far from being an affirmation of the existence of three Gods, the mystery of the Trinity lies in the existence of a trinity of relations or relationships in one God, and each of these is itself God since it possesses the whole of the divine essence. Each one is God, yet the three are one God only.”\*

Such a “definition”(?) asks more than it answers and could certainly be correctly termed “incomprehensible.” Other definitions available add little to the comprehensibility of the doctrine: “The Father is God, the Son is God and the Holy Spirit is God, and yet there are not three Gods, but one God,” reads one; and yet another says, “Always God, always Son, at the same time Father, at the same time Son, the Son exists unbegotten with the Father, everlasting, uncreated, neither in conception nor in any smallest point does God excel the Son.”

We might quote any number of similar explanations by a host of different writers, but they do little to clarify the subject. Rather than elucidate, they only confuse. Cyril C. Richardson, in his book **The Doctrine of the Trinity**, comments on the subject: “It must be recognized that the subject is one of great difficulty. Not only is the literature on it so enormous that scarcely a lifetime would suffice to master it, but trinitarian doctrine has generated the most subtle speculations which are not easy to follow. It has been observed that while one may be in danger of losing his soul by denying it, he is in equal danger of losing his wits in trying to understand it.”

## II. THE ORIGIN OF THE TRINITY

It is readily admitted that the word “Trinity” did not have its origin in the Bible since it cannot be found there, but theologians hasten to add that the “principle of Trinity” is found there, hence it can be claimed to be a Bible doctrine. But is it?

### A. Historical Background

The Trinity had a rather inglorious early history, but its proponents rather than its opponents were the victors and the doctrine survives. In the early centuries it was not uncommon to excommunicate and even imprison men for contesting the doctrines of the church and those who opposed the Trinity when it was first introduced were bitterly denounced by the hierarchy. We will briefly review the early history of the doctrine.

**1. The origin of the Trinity.** The Trinity originated not with the Christians but with the pagans. It was part of the philosophy of Plato, a Greek philosopher some four centuries before Christ. An English scholar has noted that “the germs of all ideas, even of most Christian ones, are to be found in Plato.”

Triadic formulas were a part of a variety of paganisms, and “it should surprise us greatly if these did not have an impact on late Judaism and early Christianity; and in fact it was so. The predominant idea was that of a family triad, father, spirit (female principle), and offspring. The ‘Egyptian Gospel’ mentions a ‘self-subsistent Holy Spirit.’ ”†

According to other historians, a trinity of some sort was recognized in all the ancient nations of the world. It is to be found not only in Greek mythology, but also in the mythologies of Persia, Egypt, India and Japan, all admittedly pagan. These range from a triad of gods worshiped by Taoists, a triple-bodied deity of Buddhism and a three-headed god of the Japanese.

**2. The Trinity introduced to Christianity.** Church historians agree that the word “trinity” first appeared in the writings of Tertullian near the end of the second century after Christ. It was not formulated into a church doctrine until the Council of Nice, 325 A. D. Previous to this a battle of words raged among the church fathers over the proper wording of the doctrine of the Trinity. Arius, a priest, was excommunicated and forced to seek refuge in another country for teaching that Christ did not pre-exist but that He had a beginning.

**3. The Council of Nicaea.** In the year 325 A. D. the emperor Constantine called a meeting of the church fathers to decide the matter of the Trinity. Some 300 assembled and Arius was condemned for his teaching. The context of the condemnation is interesting: “Examination was made into the impiety and lawlessness of Arius and his followers, in the presence of our most God-beloved sovereign Constantine, and it was unanimously decided that his impious opinion should be anathematized, together with all the blasphemous sayings and expressions which he has uttered... affirming that ‘the Son of God is from what is not’ and ‘there was [a time] when he was not’; saying also that the Son of God, in virtue of his free-will, is capable of evil and good, and calling him a creature and a work. All these utterances the holy Synod anath-

\* Bernard Pault, *What Is the Trinity?* p. 135.

† Gerard S. Sloyan, *The Three Persons in One God*, p. 31.

ematized. . . .”\* From this it appears that Arius and his followers were denounced because they refused to believe in the pre-existence of Christ.

The Council of Nice is better known for its formulation of the doctrine of the Trinity than for its opposition to Arianism. It “adopted the formal statement of the consubstantiality of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, while maintaining the distinction of personality. The doctrine of the Nicene Council was reaffirmed at various succeeding councils, and is the generally recognized doctrine of the Christian Church.”†

Probably no doctrine has had more volumes written concerning it than the Trinity. Augustine spent twenty years composing a study on the subject, yet the doctrine is still considered a “mystery.” **The Trinity cannot be understood because it does not exist; it is a pagan and not a Scripture doctrine.**

### III. PROOF ACCORDING TO THEOLOGY

Theologians claim that the Bible, while not using the word “Trinity,” definitely teaches that such a union exists. Numerous volumes have been written in an effort to prove their thesis, that is, while God is one, He exists in three persons. “We worship one God in Trinity, and Trinity in unity,” says the so-called Athanasian creed. “There is one Person of the Father, another of the Son, and another of the Holy Ghost. They are all one, coeternal, uncreated, incomprehensible, and almighty. Yet there are three persons, distinguished by the fact that the Father is unbegotten, the Son begotten, and the Spirit, proceeding from the Father and [or through] the Son.”

The doctrine of the Trinity has been stated and restated in various creeds: There was the Nicene Creed, the Athanasian creed, the creed of Constantinople, and the Apostles Creed. But creeds are the work of men (the apostles had nothing to do with the “Apostles Creed”), not the word of God. We will study some Scriptures adduced by Trinitarians to prove the doctrine.

#### A. Old Testament

After establishing the Trinity as an official tenet of the church, the leading theologians of the day determined there must be proof for it in the Old Testament in spite of the fact that the religion of the Jews was emphatically monotheistic. We can be sure that the Jews thought of God as they were instructed by Moses: “The Lord our God is one Lord.” Theology contradicts this, saying, “There is one God, eternally existing and manifesting Himself in three Persons.”—God is One, yet three, a

mathematical impossibility, but supposedly theologically possible.

**1. Proof according to theology.** A Moody publication entitled “The Trinity, Must We Believe It?” cites as Old Testament proof of the existence of three Gods in one the fact that the Old Testament word most frequently used for God is plural in form. Examples given include Genesis 3:22, 27, “Behold the man is become as one of US,” and Genesis 11:7, “Let US go down now.”

According to the booklet, “This word [presumably **elohim**] is found hundreds of times . . . There is a plural name for the one God because there is a multiplicity of Persons in the one Godhead.”

This is an exercise in jumping at conclusions. Had the author not been attempting to prove the existence of three Gods in one, he might not have reached such a conclusion. There is absolutely nothing to indicate the presence of Jesus at any of the occasions where the plural **elohim** is used.

The word **elohim** is used often to refer to God Himself and also the angels. Gesenius’ **Hebrew and English Lexicon** says of **elohim**: “In a plural sense of gods or deities in general. . . . Not a few interpreters, both ancient and modern, have regarded **elohim** as denoting angels—see Ps. 8:5; 82:1; 97:7; 138:1. . . . Hebrews 1:6 and 2:7, 9, show plainly that this word sometimes means angels, and the authority of the New Testament decides the matter.”

Using the above definition, the “us” of both Genesis 3:22 and 11:7 would represent God and His angels, a reasonable interpretation.

A contemporary writer of the Catholic faith would also take issue with the conclusion of the writer quoted above. In a book entitled “**What Is the Trinity?**” by Bernard Piault we read the following: “God is called **Elohim** about two thousand times in the Old Testament, but this in no way challenged the monotheism of Israel. Interpreters of Scripture see in it rather a plural of intensity or of excellence and majesty, meaning that the God of Israel is the only true God. There is no way in which it can be made to disclose a revelation of the Trinity, however veiled. . . . For the same reason it cannot be admitted that Genesis 1:26, in which God-**Elohim** says: ‘Let us make man,’ suggests a joint decision of the three divine Persons.” Of Genesis 3:22, the author says, “God is talking to himself and declares that man, in judging right and wrong, has set himself up as a judge, that is, he is acting like a god.”‡

\* *Unger’s Bible Dictionary*, p. 1119.

† G. S. Sloyan, *The Three Persons in One God*, p. 60.

‡ Bernard Piault, *What Is the Trinity?* p. 25.

## B. New Testament

"The same Bible," says a contemporary writer, "that says there is but one God, continually implies, side by side with statements of the unity of the Godhead, that there are three Persons in the one Godhead. . . . That there is but one God must not be overlooked, for apart from this there cannot be a correct conception of the Trinity." This is admitted to be somewhat of a puzzle, but man being of a finite nature was not meant to understand it fully, so they say.

To the majority of present-day Christians, the doctrine of the three persons in one God is a fundamental belief, fully supported by the Scriptures. We will discuss some New Testament passages commonly used in support of the doctrine.

**1. Matthew 28:19.** Trinitarians point to this verse as the first definite linking of the three-in-one: "... baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit." The fact that this verse associates the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit does not in itself prove that a trinity of the three exists in one God. Nothing is said of their being coequal or coeternal. That it was actually a part of Christ's commission to His Apostles is questioned by some Bible students who believe that the command to baptize "in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit" was not part of the original rendering of the text but was added at a later date.

A writer in **Hastings' Encyclopedia** points out that the baptism performed in the Acts of the Apostles was not a trine baptism as according to the commission, as commanded in the traditional rendering of Matthew. (See Acts 2:38; 8:16; 10:48; 19:2-5.) The writer then comments, "The obvious explanation of the silence of the New Testament on the trine name, and the use of another formula in Acts and Paul, is that this formula was the earlier, and that the trine formula is a later addition. It would require very strong arguments to controvert this presumption, and none seem to exist."

It is obvious that such a baptism was not in use at Ephesus in Paul's time, for in answer to Paul's question: "Have ye received the Holy Spirit since ye believed?" their reply was, "We have not so much as heard whether there be any Holy Spirit" (Acts 19:2-3). Verse 5 states simply that "they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus." Obviously they knew nothing of the Trinity.

**2. I John 5:7.** Of this verse says one writer: "It is the most conclusive proof of a triune God of any

one text in the Bible." Be that as it may, it is almost universally agreed today that the verse does not belong in the Scriptures; that it is spurious, having been added several centuries after John wrote his epistle. The verse is omitted from most of the newer versions including Moffatt, Goodspeed, Williams, New English, Today's English and the Revised Standard. In most of them it is pointed out that the words do not occur in any of the best Greek manuscripts. For example, this passage in the New English Bible reads, "This is he who came with water and blood: Jesus Christ. He came, not by water alone, but by water and blood; and there is the Spirit to bear witness, because the Spirit is truth. For there are three witnesses, the Spirit, the water, and the blood, and these three are in agreement" (I John 5:6-8, verse 7 omitted).

**The Interpreter's Bible** comments: "This verse in the KJV is to be rejected. It appears in no ancient Greek MSS\* nor is it cited by any Greek father; of all the versions only the Latin contained it, and even this in none of its most ancient sources. The earliest MSS of the Vulgate do not have it. As Dodd reminds us, 'It is first quoted as a part of I John by Priscillia, the Spanish heretic, who died in 385, and it gradually made its way into the Latin Vulgate MSS until it was accepted as part of the authorized Latin text' . . . The mention in the true text (v. 8) of the three witnesses which agree naturally led to an interpretation along trinitarian lines, and this occasioned the present gloss which appears in various forms in MSS and quotations from the fifth century on."

Concerning this verse, another writer comments that the fact that it "contains a doctrine clearly revealed in the Scriptures is strong proof of its authority." **Universal acceptance of a belief does not render it the Truth of the Scriptures. Since the weight of evidence is against its being valid, we cannot accept I John 5:7 as proof of the Trinity.**

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

### TEST YOURSELF

1. Define briefly the doctrine of the "trinity" as it is accepted by the religious world.
2. Where in the Bible does the word "trinity" occur?
3. What is the earliest known source of the idea of a trinity of persons? When was it officially adopted by the so-called Christian church?

*Reprints of these studies are available upon request.*

\* MSS—Manuscripts.

# In the Context of Eternity

THE ABIB season has come and gone. We are all living in its afterglow. We have returned to a bleakish world which seems to be more and more out of step with the Christlike spirit. The New Year has come to haunt us with all its decisions and challenges that concern the meaning of life and whether our existence is worthwhile.

Will our celebration of this season, I wonder, have fitted us for the stern and austere life to which we have had to return? Have we gained any light from the Star of Bethlehem to guide us through each perplexing path of life? Has the spirit of Christ given us any strength to withstand the temptations we shall surely meet? Has the joy of the New Year season enabled us to face the sorrows and disappointments which seem to be so inescapably a part of the fabric of life? Has He who was born to be King of the whole earth been enthroned in our hearts—yours and mine?

These are important questions. In short, has the New Year done us any lasting good? We have returned to the humdrum of everyday life, better fed, renewed, refreshed. All this has real value, but how lasting will be its value? Has nothing else happened?

## *A Question of Honesty*

The question is worth looking into, because it involves our honesty. We claim to be Christian people. We remember the New Year as commemorating the birth of the Saviour of the world, Christ the Lord. But to claim that and not to allow its commemoration to make any difference in our lives is to turn our rejoicing into so much amiable hypocrisy and our holy faith degenerates into sentimental mythology. Has ours been an honest New Year season, or have all our activities clouded the real issue?

This calls us all to a stiff self-examination.

Here is individual responsibility.

It was to assist us in this duty that "when the fulness of time was come, God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law" (Gal. 4:4). While Jesus of Nazareth was here among men, God's plan for mankind was being worked out and lived out in the words and works in Galilee.

Something that mattered for all men who afterward would live godly in Christ Jesus was happening in and through one human life at that particular moment in history, at a particular place on the map.

And this man Jesus Christ, who achieved in His own life the eternal purpose to which God had called Him, called all who would follow Him to share the task. Each of them might likewise deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow. Each of them might be the person through whose hours and moments God's living law might shine out in the world.

## *Life's Eternal Significance*

Consider this last fact, and you arrive at an astonishing conclusion: a man's life—your life—*can* mean something in eternity. Ordinary duties, your ordinary duties and mine, have eternal meaning. Each day matters in eternity. This temporal life in which we attend daily to our profession, our trade, our household, has its setting, its meaning in eternity. The Lord of all creation has for us a purpose; today matters, tomorrow matters, and because they matter, most of the things we commonly worry about and strive after do not matter at all.

If then we acknowledge Christ as the Son of God, and if we observe the New Year with an honest purpose, we should be all the more sure that each day and the way we spend it matters—not on New Year's day only, but every day after.

## *In the Perspective of Eternity*

The man living in the perspective of eternity doesn't stake his life on material gain, and measure his success or failure in terms of worldly goods which perish. He is freed from the pressure of immediacy in achieving life's greatest values, for his is an eternal perspective. He considers the good of others as well as his own, for he hopes to have a long time to live with them and has no desire to exploit them. Such a one does not feel that he must see all there is to see in this present world, or taste every delightful experience. Living in the context of eternity he can afford to wait

God's time, to make sacrifices, bear crosses, give up the world's good in the hope of winning a "far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory" in the world to come.

Since he looks ahead a long way, the thinking of the man with an eternal perspective is different and beyond that of his earthbound fellows. So the Christian is different. The world is puzzled and baffled by him because its cheap and transient pleasures cannot buy him. When he seems defeated he is really conquering, and when his cause seems to be lost is the time when he is most determined to press his plans to a successful finish.

The Psalmist queried, "What man is he that desireth life, and loveth many days, that he may see good?" He knew there were a few outstanding persons possessed of that quenchless desire. Indeed, God *has* set eternity in our hearts, and provided the means whereby that desire can be fulfilled. He not only has promised us eternal life, but He also has provided the power potential to do the things that must be done if we would obtain it. Christ, our great Pattern and Example, for the joy set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame. Eternity was set in His noble heart. Eternity also may be set in our hearts. For the joy set before us we also should be impelled to surrender every whit of the old life of the flesh, and live wholly and consistently for eternal life.

The New Year, then, brings to us a special message: each day matters because it is in the setting of the eternal, and the eternal God may use it for His glory.

### *The Horror of Wasted Time*

If we really believe this, we shall find a new horror in wasting time, and a deeper shame for the amount of time for which we could only give a guilty account. What are we really doing with our time? It is far more precious than money; are we as watchful over our use of it as over our getting and spending? When all proper allowance has been made for the necessities of life, rest and recreation, what have we to show for the immense opportunity of being alive and having time to use? What will you have done with your life when it comes to its end and the account has to be rendered? Will you come to the Judge saying, "See I have gained this and this with what thou gavest me"? or will you sulkily declare what He can already see, "Lo, here thou hast that is thine"?

How do we make proper use of our time? By remembering the eternal context of our life, and seeing it as a call to a new devotion to duty.

Study the beginning of the gospel of St. John.

The Gospel writer tells how the Word of God, the Logos, or divine wisdom, that supreme reason responsible for all the workings of God's plans, brought life and light to men. And as it was assimilated into the everyday life of Christ, it came and dwelt among men. No longer was the truth imprisoned in the printed word. Now it was to walk in flesh and blood, and in the loveliness of a sinless life. And there, in the midst of that breathtaking panorama of what God's power and grace could do for mankind, appears this simple, almost naive sentence: "There was a man sent from God, whose name was John." How better could the Gospel writer have said that John's life made sense only in the perspective of eternity, in the light of all that God had done, was doing, and still would do. That same context surrounds your life and mine; and its real meaning is seen only in that same holy perspective.

But in such a noble context, every moment becomes sacred; our life and all its moments has but one purpose, to glorify God. Every moment dedicated to God, every moment on duty. There are no moral holidays. There is no eight-hour-day and five-day-week in the service of the Kingdom. Even our leisure, as well as our work, must be spent on duty, as well as our routine drudgery; all are set in the light of His pure countenance; only there do they find meaning, and fulfill His noble purpose.

Carry the thought of God at work in the world one step further, and we realize time as the sphere in which God works. History is His workshop. Our day-to-day existence is the setting in which God gets things done.

The Gospel writers did not state outrightly that God is at work in the world; they assumed it in every line they penned. Christ entered history as a part of a prescribed plan, a prophecy brought to its natural fulfillment; its verity was guaranteed by the Resurrection and underlined by His ascension. The ultimate victory of the plan is assured. Christ's return to earth, the establishment of His Kingdom, is as absolutely certain as was His resurrection and ascension.

But what of us? Will we be a part of it? Is God's purpose and business *ours*, or are we concerned with *our* plans, *our* work, *our* homes, and *our* lives? When we map out what we hope and expect to do this coming year, do we think of God at the center of it all, directing and overseeing?

Since the beginning of God's work on this planet, God has been working out His eternal purpose by which He plans ultimately to fill this earth with righteous immortals. All through the ages He has been seeking the cooperation of people such as you and me. But the tragedy of the plan is on our



part; too often we fail to give to Him the whole-hearted and single-minded loyalty that He deserves. Too often there is resistance in our consent, even when we try outwardly to be in line with it. Are we more concerned with ourselves than with God? This element of opposition or resistance to God's will was entirely absent from the life of Christ, and we must absent it from our lives also. From the time of His temptation in the wilderness to the last struggle in the Garden of Gethsemane, He put aside all attractive substitutes for His Father's will. He had a task to do, and nothing could make Him swerve from it.

This was something entirely new in human history. Never had obedience to God's law been rendered so perfectly. It was unique, yet it is ours to share. We, too, must so transform our hearts and lives that we harbor no resistance to the law of God. That is what Christ accomplished. That is what you and I must accomplish.

So let us look into the New Year in the light of these questions: How much eternity am I letting into time through my life? How am I helping the cause of God on earth? Am I ready to let God's law govern every thought and act and feeling in my life?

Those questions take us right to the heart of all that matters most. There's a new life for us in this New Year if, God willing, we will face it bravely, in the context of eternity. Our future depends on what we do with it. ●●

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### TODAY

I shall do so much in the years to come,  
But what have I done today?  
I shall give out gold in princely sum,  
But what did I give today?

I shall lift the heart and dry the tear  
I shall plant a hope in the place of fear  
I shall speak with words of love and cheer  
But what have I done today?

I shall be so kind in the afterwhile—  
But what have I been today?  
I shall bring to each lonely life a smile—  
But what have I brought today?

I shall give to truth a greater birth  
And to steadfast faith a deeper worth,  
I shall feed the hungering souls of earth,  
But whom have I fed today?

From A Reader—

## NOW Is The Time!

WE HAVE once more entered the beginning of a wonderful new year. It is a new opportunity for each of us to renew our efforts toward self-improvement and a more devout and holy life. It is a time to get down into a deeper examination of self in order that we may uncover and bring to light those failings we yet have not faced up to.

We must say, as did the young man to Jesus, "Master, what lack I yet?" And these words must be meaningful for us. When our sins become apparent to us, we must be of a ready mind to humble ourselves, accept correction, reproof and warning, and employ determination to overcome. We must so desire to be clean of hands and pure of heart that we will be willing and anxious to probe deeply into our hearts in this self-examination.

Our enemy, self, is surely deceitful, treacherous and stubborn. And we know that as long as we are in this mortal body, we will have these strong temptations with which to contend.

It is a human trait to label these sins by some other less incriminating name, but if we are honest we shall recognize the folly of self-deceit. Sin is sin, and no manner of sophistry will change the facts. We must learn to face up to every sin, large or small, and humbly employ every honest effort to eradicate every trace. This is absolutely necessary if we would be counted a part of the Lord's holy temple. His building will be complete someday, and will be furnished with all manner of precious stones, each perfect in its beauty. We cannot hope to be a part of this without working together with Him in order to grow up into perfection.

*Now* is the accepted time. *Now* is the day of salvation. This is the time to build for the future. Real opportunity lies ahead with the fresh New Year, and it must be our resolution to truly make this year better than ever. We can, each one of us, live just one day at a time and that is all God requires. We can each one of us live in such a way that our growth will be swift and sure.

Let us now resolve to do our very best in the moments and days that, God willing, will follow. We must not forget our vow as the road becomes steep and difficult. Now is the time!

Mrs. E. L., Northfield, Ohio

# Bible A B C's



**B** IS for Benjamin. Benjamin's mother, Rachel, died when Benjamin was a tiny baby. He had one older brother named Joseph, and ten big half-brothers. His father's name was Jacob. After the death of Rachel, Jacob had a kind woman take care of Benjamin and he grew to be a sturdy little boy. Benjamin loved his brother Joseph, and Jacob loved both of these boys very much. He taught both Benjamin and Joseph to love God and be obedient children.

Benjamin's ten big half-brothers were much older and they took care of Jacob's sheep. Sometimes they had to go a long way from home to find grass for the sheep.

One day when the big brothers had been gone for a long time, Jacob called Joseph and told him to go where his big brothers were keeping the sheep and find out how things were going with them. Benjamin was sorry to see Joseph leave home. As he said "Goodbye" to Joseph, he wished that he could go too, but he knew he was too little for such a long journey.

As Benjamin waited for Joseph to return, the days seemed to drag ever so slowly, and Ben-

**B** is for  
**B** enjamin

jamin wondered why Joseph didn't come home. His father Jacob became worried, too. At last, the ten big brothers came home and there was talk about a wild animal having killed Joseph. This made Benjamin and his father very sad.

Years went by and Benjamin grew to manhood. It was then that a famine came upon the land of Canaan and food became very scarce. At last, Jacob heard that there was food for sale in Egypt and he decided to send his ten oldest sons to that far country to buy food. It took quite a long time for the men to get to Egypt and back home again with the precious food they had purchased. The brothers told of the stern man who was in charge of the sale of food in Egypt and how harsh he had

been with them. He had even demanded that they bring Benjamin with them the next time they came.

After a while the food was nearly gone and Jacob wanted his sons to make another trip to Egypt to buy food but they refused to go unless Benjamin was allowed to go with them. Jacob was afraid something might happen to him, but Benjamin's brothers continued their refusal and Jacob finally let Benjamin make the trip, too.

When they arrived in Egypt, Benjamin saw the ruler who talked harshly to them, but he invited them to eat with him that day and seemed more friendly. When Benjamin and his brothers left Egypt to go home, they had only gone a short distance when they saw Egyptians pursuing them. These Egyptians insisted that someone had stolen the ruler's silver cup. Benjamin and all his brothers denied doing such an evil thing but the cup was found in Benjamin's sack. Benjamin could not explain how it happened.

The brothers once more returned to Egypt and faced the stern ruler. He seemed very

*(Continued on page 26)*

# Ears and No Ears

*"They are like the deaf adder that stoppeth her ear"*  
—Ps. 58:4

**A**LMOST everyone knows what it is to be deaf. Our ears can become stopped by sickness, or infection, or simply from wax. Such deafness is only temporary. Then there is deafness that is permanent; there are many people who have never heard a bird sing, or a chime ring, or a mother speak, or an airplane roar.

That is one kind of deafness, and one kind of ear-stopping; but there is another. The first is the kind that cannot be helped; but the second is the kind you and I can help, and it is the deafness of our text.

The man who wrote this psalm was thinking of a sight that boys and girls in the East often see—the snake charmer and his snakes. Today in India and other hot countries the snake charmer will gather a crowd in no time. He has a basket with him, and out of it he shakes a number of snakes. They are very indignant at being disturbed, and they twist and wriggle in a most alarming fashion. But the charmer takes his flute and plays on it some notes soft and low; and at the sound of the music, the snakes stop their angry twisting, lift their heads, and begin to sway backwards and forwards in time to the music. As the charmer plays louder and quicker, the creatures raise their heads higher and sway their bodies more rapidly. Presently the charmer takes a few steps in one direction, and as he moves the snakes glide after him. When he stops, they stop. Where he leads, they follow. They are completely under the spell of the music.

But the adder in our text does not want to hear. It simply coils itself round with its head in the middle of its folds and pays no attention to the music. The adder doesn't hear because it purposely stops its ears. And this is an adder that a good many of us are rather fond of imitating.

There are three reasons why we are deaf, and the first is that we don't *want* to hear. We are like the famous old lady who, when she saw that she was getting the worst of an argument, simply closed her ears and went away.

It is wonderful how faint a whisper we can hear when we want to hear. Two children were playing in a room where their mother was entertaining a friend. The mother and the friend were talking in a very low voice, and thought the children were taking no notice. Suddenly the little girl said to

her brother, "Hush! I can't hear all they're saying." What we want to hear we have no difficulty in hearing.

The second reason why we are deaf is that we are too busy to hear. You know how it is when you get interested in a good book. The room may be full of children shouting; someone may be strumming the piano; but you hear none of the noise. You might as well be alone on a desert island. You are deaf to what is going on around, for your whole being is intent on the story. Someone calls you, but your ears are closed to the outer sounds of the day; they are open only to the inner music which your book is making for you.

Now it is an excellent thing to be busy, but it is not an excellent thing to be deaf when you should hear. If "busyness" makes us deaf to the call of duty, then it is a wrong "busyness," and the sooner we stop it, the better. Some people in the world are so busy looking after themselves that they have no time to hear the cry of others who need their help; they are so busy enjoying themselves that they have no time to think of those people who have no happiness and who need young hearts to cheer their lives. That is a sad kind of "busyness," isn't it?

A third reason why we are deaf is that we are afraid to hear. We do wrong, and we are afraid to listen to those who tell us we are doing wrong. Maybe we know better, and the little telephone bell of our conscience rings and rings and rings. But we try to close our ears to its ringing. We dare not listen, for we know well what the voice is saying—"Don't do it! Don't do it!" So we stop our ears and continue doing the wrong thing. We are afraid to listen.

Instead of being afraid, we should be glad we can still hear it; we should be thankful that we know it is wrong, and stop doing it immediately. If we do not learn to listen when others tell us we are wrong, we shall become too hardened to hear the voice of God, and God will just leave us to go our own stubborn way without Him. And of all things that could happen, this is the saddest. It is a most incurable kind of deafness—deafness that we deliberately choose. You see, if we go on refusing to listen, our ears get so accustomed to not listening that they fail to hear even when we want them to hear.

Let us try to get rid of the "don't-want-to-hear" deafness and the "too-busy-to-hear" deafness, and let us cure the "afraid-to-hear" deafness by bravely listening whenever someone tells us we are doing wrong, or whenever our conscience tells us we are wrong, and then obey that voice. So shall we have the "hearing ear" which is one of the most precious possessions of every child of God. ●●

## What Are You Concerned About?

(Continued from page 5)

especially meaningful when we consider what they would have meant to people of His day. He first says to avoid the things that moths can destroy. In the east, part of a man's wealth often consisted in fine and elaborate clothes. When Gehazi, servant of Elisha, wished to make some forbidden profit out of Naaman, after his master had cured him, Gehazi asked for a talent of silver and two changes of raiment (II Kings 5:22). A goodly Babylonish garment tempted Achan to sin (Josh. 7:21). Jesus' lesson was that such things were foolish things to set the heart upon, for moths get at them and their value and beauty is gone. There is no permanence in such possessions.

The Greek word translated "rust" means literally "eating away." It is most likely the picture of a man whose wealth consisted of large stores of wheat and other grain. Rats and mice could easily invade, and the entire supply could be polluted and its value destroyed. Again, there is no permanence in such possessions.

Jesus was saying that a man is foolish who finds his pleasure in things which are bound to offer diminishing returns. He is also foolish if he gives his heart to joys which the years can take away; he should find his delight in the things the thrill of which time is powerless to erode, pleasures which grow brighter and brighter unto the perfect day. Jesus warns against pleasures that can be stolen. All material things are that uncertain; if a man builds his happiness on them, he is building on a most insecure basis. If wise, we will build our happiness on things which we cannot lose, things which are independent of the chances and changes of this life, treasures which are heavenly and eternal. A poet once wrote of the fleeting things:

But pleasures are like poppies spread;  
You seize the flower, its bloom is shed;  
Or like the snow falls in the river,  
A moment white—then melts for ever.

If our treasure, if our foremost concern, is bound up in *things*, we are destined for loss, for in things there is no permanence.

Jesus concludes this thought by stating that where our treasure is, there also is our heart. If everything we value and set our heart upon is on earth, then all our interest will be in the things of earth and we will have little interest in anything beyond. If all through our life our eyes are fixed on eternity, on the world to come, then we will learn to evaluate everything of this world in the

light of the better world to come. We will see this world not as the ultimate in life, but only as a stage in life, and therefore will never give our heart to the things of this world. Our eyes will be ever fixed on the goal beyond, our treasure that is now in heaven. There is joy supernal, enduring peace, and life that will know no end, and our hearts must be all wrapped up in these things. For where our treasure is, there will our heart be also.

"The light of the body is the eye: if therefore thine eye be single, thy whole body shall be full of light" (Matt. 6:22). Here is a further lesson on excessive concern for things that are temporal: it can distort our vision. If our heart is set on God and what He has offered us, we cannot have one eye on the things of the world.

"No man can serve two masters: for either he will hate the one, and love the other; or else he will hold to the one, and despise the other. Ye cannot serve God and mammon." No man can be the slave of two masters. This is not a threat, but a plainly stated truth. A slave in those days was a living tool. He had no time which he could call his own. Every moment belonged to his owner and was at his owner's disposal. This, then, is our relationship as servants of God. We never have the right to ask, "What do I wish to do?" but must always ask, "What does God wish me to do?" The Christian has no time off from his responsibility. There is no time when he can relax his Christian standards, as if he were off-duty. Spasmodic service to God is no service at all. Being a Christian is a full-time job.

"Ye cannot serve God and mammon." The point is not that possessing wealth and serving God are incompatible, but that *serving* one's possessions (mammon comes from an Aramaic word meaning "property" or "riches") cannot coexist with the service of God.

The problem is one of choice, here termed "God and mammon." The question finally concerns not a hundred possible masters but two, as Christ repeatedly taught. Sheep or goats, figs or thistles, right or wrong, the world or the Father, the broad road or the narrow road, time or eternity—the alternative has many names, but remains the one immemorial human choice. "God and mammon" are good names for the alternative; for God is the ultimate, suggesting all that is holy and supreme and everlasting, and the word mammon implies the many facets of worldliness—money, success, pride of possession—by which every man is tempted.

We must choose. If we give the things of the world our first concern, we are not serving God

and will never gain the eternal blessedness. "Be not of the world," is the divine decree. And Jesus said, "They are not of the world, even as I am not of the world" (John 17:16). Unless serving God means more to us than the things of this world, we have no claim to being the slave of Christ.

### Needless Anxiety

"Therefore I say unto you, Take no thought for your life [do not be anxious about your life], what ye shall eat, or what ye shall drink; nor yet for your body, what ye shall put on. Is not the life more than meat, and the body than raiment?" (Matt. 6:25). The rendering of this text in the King James Version is not so accurate as many other versions which translate it: "Be not careful for your life," or "Do not be anxious about your life." Jesus is not advocating a shiftless, thriftless, thoughtless attitude to life. It is not ordinary, prudent foresight that Jesus forbids; He is forbidding a careworn, worried fear, which misdirects life and ends only in death.

Jesus is once again contrasting things temporal with things eternal. He does not say we are not to go to work and earn our daily bread. Jesus told us to pray, "Give us this day our daily bread"; but who would think that God would rain down loaves of bread already baked? We must do on our part, and God will do on His. There are two sides: God will perform His, if we perform ours.

We read in Matthew 6:26: "Behold the fowls of the air: for they sow not, neither do they reap, nor gather into barns; yet your heavenly Father feedeth them. Are ye not much better than they?" They have to be fed of what grows out of the earth, and so do we. God furnishes laws of nature, and grain to sow, and they partake, and so can we. But how are we to use it? To gain strength to serve the Lord, and keep our minds on eternal things.

We need temporal things, and God provides them for our use; but we must not be overly concerned with them; we must not set our affections on these things. We must use the temporal only to gain the eternal. "Set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth" (Col. 3:2).

God promises to supply all our need (Phil. 4:19) to spare us the miseries of worry. But this does not mean that we are to sit down and fold our hands in idleness. We must work, but we must use all our temporal wealth to serve for the future. We must labor all the time for the eternal values, and employ the temporal to this end.

God will bless most the man who is using all for eternity. He is the one who will have all things richly to enjoy. He will not be begging. He will

have sufficient for his needs, and will be free to give his first concerns to the seeking of the things that are eternal.

### The Kingdom FIRST

This follows the climaxing thought of the passage: "But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you." A lens cannot have two focal points. A country cannot have two prime ministers. The universe cannot have two First Causes. And so a life cannot have two first interests. One thing must dominate all else. The situation of the Christian in this world has been compared to that of a man reading a book. The man intent upon the book may still be marginally aware of the temperature of the room and the ticking of the clock, but the book dims every other impression.

What is the center of life for us? Our lives should be like the solar system—Christ and His Kingdom should be at the center, and everything else should revolve around it. But too often we let our lives get off-center; we may not be seeking the "bad," but we live for the "good" instead of the "best."

The world today is passing through a stage that might well be described as one of great paradox. It has unparalleled blessings and advantages, but the outstanding characteristics are of instability and insecurity. The result of these conditions is an unwholesome attitude of indifference. This irresponsibility can be seen and felt throughout the world from the upper levels to the day laborer. It is a kind of social disease that numbs many a virtuous effort to a mediocre performance. What shall we eat? What shall we drink? What shall we wear? continue to occupy the minds of the majority.

And this monotonous maze of interests can easily distract us as professing believers. When we would plan our decisions, determine our duty, clarify our ideals, we are met with great difficulty, for we live amidst confused affairs and shifting standards. But let us mark this observation well, that if these things trouble us, we are not seeking *first* the Kingdom of God and the righteousness that will prepare us for a place in that Kingdom. What comes first in our lives? We can determine this if we ask, "For to me to live is..."? (Phil. 1:21).

Do we fully realize that what we are the most interested in and concerned with is what we will be talking about, not only talking about but acting upon?

He who comes and goes in the service of God, swinging in and out like a door on its hinges,



without a word concerning the glory and majesty of the coming Kingdom or a word of warning or encouragement to his brother, will never sit down at the marriage feast, for he will be a stranger there.

With the prospect of life eternal before us, we cannot allow our lives to be all cluttered with temporal concerns while we allow the more important things to languish. Life is real, life is earnest; and if we desire to have *our* life perpetuated in the Kingdom of God, we must make the seeking of that Kingdom the first thing in our lives. Our everyday life is what is telling whether we are making the things of God and His kingdom our first choice in life. If we are someday a part of that heavenly Kingdom on earth, we can be sure it was because we were above everything else concerned about getting ourselves there. ●●

## Blending A Tasteful Life

*(Continued from page 8)*

purity, to burn out the dross of the human character, to leave us cleansed and purified. By the way in which we meet these purifying experiences we are fitting or unfitting ourselves for the richer, fuller, more tasteful life.

A real Christian stays calm in spite of the distasteful events of life. He does not get touchy or moody when he cannot have his own way. He does not go to pieces at the least provocation. He does not have tantrums and blue spells and flare-ups. When his best endeavors are misunderstood and misrepresented, when he does well and suffers for it, when his thoughtful gesture is interpreted as a slight, he accepts all this as a necessary ingredient of the fuller, more satisfying, tasteful life.

Although we may find the ingredients in the Lord's cup hard to swallow at times and not very tasty, if we continue to eat and digest every ingredient we shall someday find in that cup the most delectable and rarest of all foods—Christ will come forth and serve us with immortality! And to us will be granted the richest, fullest, most satisfying and tasteful life to last through the ages of eternity. Yes, eye has not seen and ear has not heard, neither has it entered into the heart of man to conceive of all the things which God has promised the overcomers.

With such a tasteful life ahead of us, is any ingredient too difficult to eat with a relish and a desire for more? ●●

## LETTERS

### No Turning Back!

As Christian soldiers we dare not let down our guard. Turning back will not only be fatal for me, but my action may be chaotic to those who may be watching me. Besides, as Peter queried, "Lord, to whom shall we go? Thou hast the words of eternal life."

I once heard a story of a boy falling out of bed at night. His parents, upon hearing the noise, came to his side and asked what was the cause of the mishap. The boy sobbing replied, "I slept too close to the place where I got in." This can be a lesson of deepest concern for the Christian, that we earnestly strive against spiritual drowsiness or lethargy, and remove ourselves as far as possible from every temptation to sin. We need to be perfectly joined together in the same mind, as we wait for the coming of our Lord.

*Thermopolis, Wyoming*

J. A.

### Humility A Necessity

Humility is one of the prerequisites of a Christian life plainly set forth by our Lord (Matt. 18:1-4; Mark 10:13-14).

While humility is a Christian grace to be eagerly desired, pride, its antonym, must be avoided. I often take a survey of my mental storehouse to see whether I am hoarding any pride or superciliousness. Pride is an insidious trait; we must be sure that it is all out of our whole personality. So let us be humble that the knowledge of God may raise us; let us be seekers that we may find.

*Kansas City, Missouri*

J. E.

### Patience in Practice

The other day I was sewing on a quilt top, and before I realized it, I had gone a long way wrong. There was nothing to do but rip it all out. I repeated James 1:4, "But let patience have her perfect work, that ye may be perfect and entire, wanting nothing." I keep it in mind lots of times.

We need to strive harder to meditate, do and grow into holiness. It may be later than we think.

*Canton, Texas*

Mrs. B. N.

### The Last Day

Some of these days will be the last, and then people will wish they had worked for the things that do not perish.

The pleasures of the day take the eye of the majority. I know people who spend hours of time attending ball games, theaters, hockey games, and go many miles to see evil on the movie screen. If they spent the same time and money profitably, they could be working out their own salvation and building on the solid rock.

*North Augusta, Ontario, Canada*

G. H.

MEGIDDO MESSAGE

# QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

"Dr. Charles Potter in his book, *The Story of Religion*, says 'It has been correctly said that practically all the recorded utterances of Jesus can be duplicated in Jewish literature written before the New Testament was written' (p. 219). Is Scripture then without purpose? must we have a superior Authority to regulate our lives and give us faith in a future life?"

This observation in no way detracts from the authority of Jesus or of the New Testament. The Bible is the Word of God. Paul declared that the things "written aforetime were written for our learning, that we through patience and comfort of the scriptures might have hope" (Rom. 15:4). Peter adds, "For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man: but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Spirit" (II Pet. 1:21). Paul also pictures the Church as being built upon the "foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner stone" (Eph. 2:20). The intelligence that authorized the New Testament also had authorized the Old Testament, hence Jesus could advise His hearers to accept the authority of the Old Testament as completely as His own sayings.

When conversing unrecognized with the two brethren on the way to Emmaus the afternoon of the day of Jesus' resurrection, He "expounded to them in all the scriptures the things concerning himself."

What is so wrong with having a superior Authority over our lives to keep us living straight? The dire results of the absence of authority is shown in the condition of society today. When every man does what seems right in his own eyes, we have anarchy—the breakdown of law and authority and moral living that we currently witness on every hand.

Why condemn a man for believing it is possible for him to obtain eternal life in some future world? Surely the power that created us in the first place, and designed and created all the wonders of what we style "nature" is not limited to what we see and experience in our mortal life. If such beliefs make a man better and happier while he lives, and a blessing to all with whom he associates, why condemn such a hope? Is not higher education recommended on these same grounds?

If atheists would devote half of the energy to finding a reason as to why men should accept the

idea of God and the authority of the Bible that they devote to finding reasons for discrediting it, they would find life much more rewarding and would be benefited in every way.

**"Do you permit the use of jewelry and makeup?"**

No, the Bible defines lawful Christian adornment as exclusive of that which is worn only for show. "Whose adorning let it not be that outward adorning of plaiting the hair, and of wearing of gold, or of putting on of apparel; but let it be the hidden man of the heart, in that which is not corruptible, even the ornament of a meek and quiet spirit, which is in the sight of God of great price" (I Pet. 3:3-4).

**"How can you worship Jesus if you don't believe He is God?"**

Because Jesus spoke repeatedly of His Father and of His own role as Son, we cannot believe He was His own Father. Nor can we accept the idea that He was equal in power and authority to His Father, for He said, "My Father is greater than I" (John 14:28). He was sent of His Father (a separate being), He lived a life pleasing to His Father (again a separate being) and He ascended to His Father (obviously not to Himself) (John 14:12).

How then can we worship Jesus?

Near the close of Jesus' earthly ministry, the Father apparently delegated to Jesus a certain degree of authority by which He could and would act as intercessor and mediator (I Tim. 2:5) and receive prayer and petition. "Ye have not chosen me, but I have chosen you, and ordained you, that ye should go and bring forth fruit, and that your fruit should remain: that whatsoever ye shall ask of the Father in my name, he may give it you" (John 15:16). Again He spoke in His last recorded sermon delivered the same night in which He was betrayed, "Verily, verily, I say unto you, Whatsoever ye shall ask the Father in my name, he will give it you. Hitherto have ye asked nothing in my name: ask, and ye shall receive, that your joy may be full. . . . At that day ye shall ask in my name: and I say not unto you, that I will pray the Father for you: for the Father himself loveth you, because ye have loved me, and have believed that I came out from God. I came forth from the Father [Jesus was conceived by the Holy Spirit] and am come into the world" (John 16:23-28).

The New Testament confirms this, giving frequent mention of Christ in His role of mediator and as worthy of worship and honor (see Heb. 8:6; 9:15; Rev. 15:4). ●●

## Meditations On the Word

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to our Captain and to His Church—the unity of the body of Christ.

We may as well make up our minds to give the Creator the kind of service He requires, or take the broad way with the masses—get in step or get out—for we cannot fool God, no matter how hard we try. We may deceive ourselves, we may deceive our fellowmen, but we cannot deceive the Almighty, for “the Lord searcheth all hearts, and understandeth all the imaginations of the thoughts.” He understands us far better than we understand ourselves, for we are His workmanship. He, being our Creator, knows what restraint and guidance we need, and has provided laws fitted especially to our race. To doubt or to break one of the least of His commandments is to question the wisdom of the Lawgiver, a presumptuous and fatal thing to do. King David spoke these words from the depths of bitter experience, for more than once he had tried to “climb up some other way,” and had found in every case that it did not pay. Again and yet again he had been pulled abruptly back into the way of sanity by friends who could see him better than he could see himself (these are the eyes of the Lord), whether a righteous Nathan or an unscrupulous Joab. And let it be said to his eternal credit that David was man enough to take the rebukes with humility and good grace and profit by them.

“If thou seek him, he will be found of thee: but if thou forsake him, he will cast thee off forever.” And He means just that, no more and no less. God will meet us more than half-way, but the first move is ours. There is no compulsion: He will never save men or women against their will: but if we seek Him with a perfect heart and a willing mind, we shall find at the end of the way a reward far above all we could, with our limited mental powers, imagine in our wildest dreams. Riches and honor are in the left hand of the Wisdom of God, and in her right hand length of days, even eternal life, free from disease, decay, pain or sorrow. And on the other hand, if at the Great Assize we find ourselves on the wrong side, cast off forever, there will be no sorrow like unto our sorrow, with only ourselves to blame. “Behold therefore the goodness and severity of God: on them which fell, severity; but toward thee, goodness, if thou continue in his goodness: otherwise thou also shalt be cut off” (Rom. 11:22).

The record reveals the sobering fact that all this excellent advice was, in the long run, lost upon Solomon. After a most promising beginning, his weaknesses soon came to light. That would have been a good thing, had he been willing to do something about them, but he was not. His great prosperity had turned his head; and more and more he trusted in material things, until from a wise and humble child he came to be an old and foolish king, who would no more be admonished (Eccl. 4:13). Did Solomon realize that he was describing himself? We wonder. There is no excuse for Solomon, who, with all his wisdom, so blindly and stupidly threw away his own eternal life. One of the most tragic and sorrowful figures at the Judgment will be this once magnificent king of Israel, when across the wasted years come those long forgotten words of his aged father, “If thou forsake him, he will cast thee off for ever.” ●●

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## B is for Benjamin

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angry and insisted that Benjamin remain a prisoner in Egypt. However, his brothers knew how sad their father would be if they did not bring Benjamin home with them and they pleaded with the ruler to let Benjamin go with them.

Then something almost unbelievable happened. The stern ruler sent every Egyptian from the room. Then he told them that he was Joseph, their brother, who had been gone for so long. Benjamin was so happy to find his brother again.

Then the real truth came out. Joseph's brothers had sold him as a slave years before, and they had never told the truth about his disappearance. This was very wrong for them to do. They did a very bad thing and then acted a lie to cover up their evil deed. ●●

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## A Balanced Life

Faith without Credulity  
Conviction without Bigotry  
Charity without Condescension  
Courage without Pugnacity  
Self-Respect without Vanity  
Humility without Servility  
Love without Sentimentality  
Meekness with Power.



KING DAVID, stricken in years and feeble in body, has abdicated in favor of Solomon his favorite son, in a hasty move to crash a rebellion headed by another son, Adonijah, who aspires to the throne. Upon the accession of Solomon the revolution has collapsed, for the time, and now the aged ex-monarch has assembled his officers to bid them farewell. In the midst of the nation's disorders, the thing still nearest his heart is his cherished ambition of many years to build or have built a fitting temple for Jehovah, and he takes this opportunity to charge Solomon with the task, ending with the gem of fatherly advice in the text quoted below. Surely no wiser counsel was ever given by a father to his beloved son, and the advice is for us no less than for Solomon (Romans 15:4).

To know the God of our fathers is to understand His law, His will for us. Solomon had great advantages, being instructed by angels, by visions, by the direct word of the prophets. We can know our Creator only through His works and His revealed Word. "Whereby, when ye read, ye may understand my knowledge in the mystery of Christ" (Eph. 3:4). This knowledge is by no means universal in this age, nor even popular, only a "very small remnant" being in the way of understanding.

To know, in the full meaning of the verb, is to do the things learned; for knowledge without practice is like a flower without fruit. Nor will a desultory practice be effective, if salvation is our goal; it is all or nothing. Perfection is the divine standard, yesterday and today and forever. Those who deny the possibility of perfection of character will argue that our actions do not so much matter so long as our heart is right. The fact

of this matter is, if our heart is right, our actions will as a matter of course be the same, so that a perfect heart is synonymous with a perfect life. Perfection is not an impossible task; it simply means the keeping of all the commandments of God. If one precept can be kept, then two can; and so on to the end of the analogy, which brings us to perfection. Inversely, if one breach of the law could be tolerated, it opens the way for the violation of every commandment, rendering the entire law null and void. Certainly the Almighty would give us no laws which we could not keep, nor any which He did not intend for us to obey.

This perfection of character is no easy task, nor will it ever be attained without the next adjunct mentioned, "a willing mind." A grudging, reluctant, backward-looking service is worse than useless. Unless all willingness and joyfulness enter into the work, we shall never go far toward attaining the "measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ." "I delight to do thy will, O my God," cried the sweet singer of Israel, "yea, thy law is within my heart" (Psalm 40:8). Delight is a strong word, but even that is not enough: the highest point, the ultimate, is reached in Paul's term, "Glorying." "God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world"

(Gal. 6:14). The thing in which we not only delight but actually glory will be our all in all, our meat and drink, the dominant chord, the undertone and overtone of our whole lives. "Glorying in the cross" implies not only our personal, individual relations with our God, but a certain *esprit de corps*, an ardent loyalty

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*"And thou, Solomon my son, know thou the God of thy father, and serve him with a perfect heart and with a willing mind: for the Lord searcheth all hearts, and understandeth all the imaginations of the thoughts: if thou seek him, he will be found of thee; but if thou forsake him, he will cast thee off for ever"—(1 Chronicles 28:9).*

# The Dawning

*Ah! what time wilt Thou come? When shall that cry  
"The Bridegroom's coming!" fill the sky?  
Shall it in the evening run  
When our words and works are done?  
Or will Thy all-surprising light  
Break at midnight,  
When either sleep, or some dark pleasure  
Possesseth mad man without measure?  
Or shall these early, fragrant hours  
Unlock Thy bowers?  
And with their blush of light descry  
Thy locks crown'd with eternity?*

*Oh, at what time soever Thou,  
Unknown to us, the heavens wilt bow,  
And with Thy angels in the van,  
Descend to judge poor careless man,  
Grant I may not like puddle lie  
In a corrupt security,  
Where, if a traveler water crave,  
He finds it dead, and in a grave;  
But at this restless, vocal spring  
All day and night doth run and sing,  
And though here born, yet is acquainted  
Elsewhere, and flowing keeps untainted;  
So let me all my busy age  
In Thy free services engage;  
And though—while here—of course I must  
Have commerce sometimes with the dust,  
Yet let my course, my aim, my love,  
And chief acquaintance be above;  
So when that day and hour shall come,  
In which Thy Self will be the sun,  
Thou'lt find me dress'd and on my way,  
Watching the break of Thy great Day.*