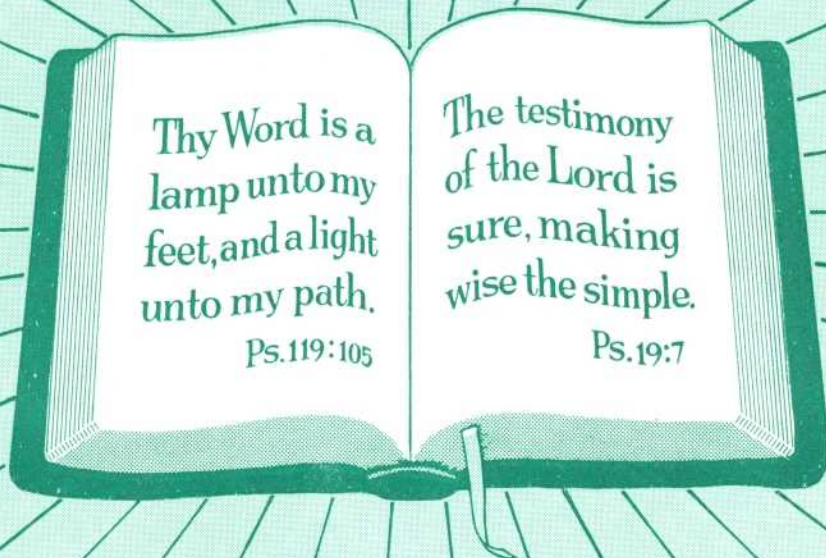


Megiddo Message

DEVOTED TO THE CAUSE OF CHRIST



The Fallacy of the Scarlet Thread (Part Four)

The Kingdom--Now or Future?

Eyes That See

The Sabbath

Megiddo Message

Vol. 58, No. 6

June, 1971

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

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

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

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

Second Class Postage paid at Rochester, New York.

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Editorially Speaking...

Does Your Tone Ring True?

The thought of tone and tone-quality suggests the subject of music. In that highly developed art it is a decisive feature, for regardless of other qualities which a performer might possess, an inferior tone is a defect which may make his efforts distasteful. The *way* he performs is as important as *what* he performs.

As Christians, the Law of God is our written score; but the *way* in which we seek our noble goal will require the most detailed attention and diligence. *How* we serve God is as important as the fact that we *serve* Him. That is the tone of our spiritual performance. It is in the little affairs of life, its daily dealings, that we manifest our true selves and what we really are. Even in the smallest mannerisms we display the *spirit* of the law, as well as its letter.

Strictly speaking, in this connection "tone" applies to our conversation. It might seem like straining at a gnat to make an issue of such a technicality as the tone and modulation of the voice. But the way in which we speak can be more effective in transferring our message than the actual words we use.

The divine instruction is to "provoke unto love and to good works," and to be an example of the believers in word, in conversation, in spirit. Our conversation is the witness of our spirit and, consequently, our tone. Jesus said, "Out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh."

There is no activity more universal to man than conversation. How important, then, is this indicator of our real selves! We cannot overestimate the need for care in the use of it. Our friends do not judge us by what we think or feel but by what we say, and *how we say it*. Said David, "To him that ordereth his conversation aright, will I show the salvation of God." Jesus Himself warned, "By thy words thou shalt be justified, and by thy words thou shalt be condemned."

We claim to love God. But we do not love Him if we manifest a harsh, rough spirit toward "the least of these my brethren," said the Master. Even the Golden Rule demands that we think of the effect of our words on others. This surely includes the tone of the voice. Do we love God? Our great apostle Paul said, "Love has good manners, is very kind, is never rude, never selfish"—what could better define a true Christian *tone*?

The *way* we say a thing is also important to our God. All our mannerisms tell a story. God demands *willing* obedience, and this has to do with the tone of our spiritual performance. He is sensitive to our spirit and our motives. The outward tone and the inward heart are one.

We need to pray and meditate on these things. They are the ground upon which we must work out our salvation. ● ●

The Fallacy of the Scarlet Thread

Paul the Apostle forewarned of an apostasy from true religion that should come after his time. Into the church that Christ had founded there should be introduced a system of teaching completely foreign to the precepts of its Founder. Salvation through Christ's shed blood is one of these teachings.

Mankind would with "itching ears" turn from "truth" to "fables." "Fable" and "fallacy" are related terms meaning to compose or tell fables, or anything that deceives the mind; delusive reasoning. Surely the fallacy of the scarlet thread is a fable, a lie, delusive reasoning.

In preceding issues we presented evidence that Christ's literal death in no way annuls the sins of mankind, God's unequivocal terms for salvation being, "Be ye holy, for I am holy." We found that the blood of the covenant in no way involved substitution, and that even the Law of Moses offered no parallel for the blood sacrifice of Christ for the sins of mankind. Further study revealed that the grace of God which saves is the gospel or Word of God, and that our only freedom from sin lies in strict obedience to the laws of God.

In our May issue we discussed how Christ died for our sins—an exemplary death, showing us how to die that same death to sin.

In this concluding article we learn how Christ bore our sins, how He suffered for us, and what is the blood of Christ which has power to cleanse us from sin.

PRAYER

Our Father which art in heaven, hallowed be Thy Name. May Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done in earth as it is in heaven. Father, grant us the surrender to let Thy will be done in our own lives, that wherever we are or whatever we are doing, we may show forth the Christ-life in our actions, our words and our attitudes.

May our lives be such that wherever we go Thou wilt be with us. May we recognize Thee in all the

deeper experiences of our soul. When our enlightened conscience utters its warning voice, when the heart is tender and we forgive those who have wronged us in word or deed, when we feel ourselves upborne above time and place and know ourselves potential citizens of Thy everlasting Kingdom, we realize, O Lord, that these things are not our natural heritage. They are Thine, the work of Thy saving gospel influencing our hearts and lives.

Spirit of holiness and peace, search all our motives; try the secret places of our hearts; set in the light any evil that may lurk within, and lead us in the way everlasting. Take possession of our bodies; purge them from spiritual feebleness and sloth and all fleshly self-indulgence. Take possession of our wills that they may be one with Thine. May we be willing to cut off the right hand, or pluck out the right eye, if only we may feel the life of the new man pulsing within us.

Dear Father, may we develop such a strong desire to put on the character of the Lord Jesus Christ that even if we do well and suffer for it, we will take it patiently. Whatever perplexing situations may arise in our lives, may we accept them as part of the needed training Thou art giving to make something of us.

To merit the high position of Sovereign of the whole earth, Thy dear Son was subjected to many trials and testings, but He bore them patiently even to the death on the cross. Grant, Father, that we may take our lesser testings in the right spirit, that we may obtain a place in His kingdom.

We pray Thee to be with the sick and afflicted, and those in the throes of temptation or poor health. Administer to them Thy healing as it is compatible with Thy holy will.

And may all things work together for our good and spiritual advantage, that we may win the "well done" of the Judge in the Day of Final Account, and with all the good and faithful inherit glory. In Jesus' name. Amen.

DISCOURSE

OF ALL the principles of doctrine in God's Holy Word which have been grievously and shamefully distorted by the creeds of men, none has suffered more than the doctrine of the sacrifice and death of Jesus Christ. Indeed, out of the few fibers of Scripture which relate to the physical death of Christ, theology has woven a scarlet thread which has entangled the majority of religious-minded persons.

If the various expositions given by the multitude of religious teachers concerning the death and blood of Christ be true, then the God in whom we live, move and have a being, the Creator, moral Ruler and Judge of all the earth, is an autocratic, malevolent being, with no concept of justice, void of all feelings of sympathy, and destitute of mercy, grace and love.

The general belief of churchianity concerning the sacrifice of Jesus may be briefly summed up in the following outline: that God, as Creator, Law-giver and Judge of all mankind, has been so grievously offended and angered by man, having disbelieved His Word and violated His law, that in His divine wrath and judgment, God sentenced all mankind to an almost hopeless doom. The only way for God to revoke this sentence and extend forgiveness to the creatures He had condemned was by the physical suffering, crucifixion, and ignominious death of His own beloved Son, a spotless and innocent victim.

This, in brief, is the accepted theory of the average theologian, concerning the sacrifice of Christ. The impossibility of ever reconciling such conceptions as these with the wisdom, goodness, justice, mercy and love of the Omnipotent and Benevolent God must be apparent to every thinking, open-minded inquirer after truth.

It is well that we should turn from this God-dishonoring and repelling caricature of the purpose of the life and death of Jesus, and its effect upon the life of the believer. The better sacrifice of Christ must of necessity be in harmony with the revealed character and nature of God, which in Scripture states that God is light, and God is love.

How Does Christ Bear Our Sins?

The scarlet thread, according to many, is strong and unbreakable as it appears in I Peter 2. They say that we, by quoting verse 21 to show how Christ suffered for us, are taking words out of their proper connection.

To understand Peter's thought in I Peter 2 we must consider what he was saying through the last

part of the chapter. Notice that his words are addressed as advice and encouragement to Christian slaves: "Servants, be subject to your masters with all fear; not only to the good and gentle, but also to the froward" (verse 18).

Slaves were a significant element in the early Church, and their position of servitude resulted in problems which deserved special advice and consideration. Therefore Peter addresses these words especially to them—and to all, bond or free, for as the Apostle says in verse 16, whatever the Christian's standing in the sight of men, bond or free, he is God's slave.

As Peter uses the term "servants" in I Peter 2: 18, the word is not suggestive of the usual condition of servitude but of a more respectful household relation. However, any servitude was bound to be problematic, as there were masters "good and gentle," and also "froward," or literally, "crooked," "perverse," "unreasonable," "cruel," and "unfair."

Peter proceeds to mark out the duty of the Christian slave: "For this is thankworthy, if a man for conscience toward God endure grief, suffering wrongfully. For what glory is it, if when ye be buffeted for your faults, ye shall take it patiently? but if, when ye do well, and suffer for it, ye take it patiently, this is acceptable with God. For even hereunto were ye called: because Christ also suffered for us[on our behalf], leaving us an example, that ye should follow his steps" (vs. 19—21).

Do these words describe a work accomplished by trusting in the blood of Christ? No. On the contrary, they picture a moral attainment far out-reaching undisciplined human nature. What man, however confident he may be of Christ's atoning sacrifice in his behalf, can be buffeted for his faults and receive it graciously without conscious effort on his part? And going deeper, to the full meaning of Peter's words, what man, however sure that Christ suffered in his stead and accomplished the work of salvation in and for him, can be buffeted for faults *he did not commit*—even to the point of suffering for them—and still take it with patience and good grace? *Doesn't this mean effort—strenuous effort on his part?*

Yet such supreme attainment was Christ's. However severe the suffering of the slave, Peter points him to Christ as an example and an ideal. Following Christ's example, every man who would belong to Christ must learn to reward ill-treatment with well-doing. In this respect, Christ's experience and the experience of the Christian slave would be identical. When reviled He reviled not again; when He suffered, "he threatened not; but committed himself to him that judgeth righteously"

(v. 23). For the man who would follow in Christ's footsteps, there could be no situation so provocative as to justify misconduct, or any occasion for returning evil for evil.

And who can say that attaining such a standard requires no effort, to "do no sin," to have no guile found in our mouth; to never return evil for evil but trust all to the God who judges in justice and in righteousness? A life wholly devoted to the practice of these principles is a life of sacrifice, of self-crucifixion, of full surrender and the highest moral achievement. It is a life of death, death to sin, as wrote Paul: "In that he died, he died unto sin once" (Rom. 6:10). This is the suffering that is appointed to us, if we would "follow his steps": "Knowing this that our old man is crucified with him, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin" (Rom. 6:6).

How Christ Suffered

Then Peter continues with the thought of Christ's suffering unjustly and bearing it nobly: "Who his own self bear our sins in his own body on the tree, that we being dead to sins, should live unto righteousness" (v. 24). Just as Christ suffered reviling without returning the ill, just as He suffered physical punishment without threatening vengeance, so He bore the *treatment* of a sinner "on" or "to the tree," as an example to the Christian slave and to all who would follow.

Let us analyze: Christ bore the treatment of a sinner "on" or "to the tree," "to the gibbet" (NEB). Deuteronomy 21:23 suggests the attitude that the Jews assumed toward Christ: "He that is hanged is accursed of God." By crucifying Him they gave Him the treatment of a sinner, and He bore it submissively, even to death. Paul in Gal. 3:13 confirms the thought that Christ from the viewpoint of the old law was accursed, "for it is written, Cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree." But as Paul explains, Christ was not really accursed, as He had done nothing worthy of the curse: "I give you to understand, that no man speaking by the spirit of God calleth Jesus accursed" (I Cor. 12:3).

The same thought occurs in Isaiah 53, where the world of unbelievers see no beauty in Christ as the Head of His body or Church. He is despised and rejected, a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief; so He received the treatment of a sinner, though He was not a sinner.

No, the makings of the scarlet thread of Christ's sacrificial death do not exist in I Pet. 2:24. He "bare our sins in his own body on [or to] the tree, that we, being dead to sins, should live unto righteousness." He died, leaving us an example that we

should die to sin as He died (v. 21). He "bare our sins in his own body on [or to] the tree, that we, *being dead to sins, should live unto righteousness.*" Individual effort is paramount again.

Healed By His Stripes

The concluding thought of verse 24 strengthens the context: "by whose stripes ye were healed." The active Christian must expect the same ill-treatment from the unchristian world that Christ received. When reviled he must not revile again, that by Christ's "stripes" he may be healed of his tendency to be hurt by the barbs of unbelievers.

How are we healed by Christ's stripes? By following Christ's holy example, by enduring as He endured, we become healed of the evils of our nature that afflict us. By enduring those who would provoke us, we heal our wounds of impatience. By surrendering the right to our own opinion, we heal our spirit of perverseness.

When Peter speaks of being healed by Christ's stripes, perhaps he is reflecting on his own unforgettable experiences. How could he fail to be reminded again and again of that one penetrating look he had received from the Master the night of the betrayal? How he had been hurt—and healed—by that painful stripe! Peter also knew what it meant to be healed by the stripes inflicted by his own obstinacy and carelessness. He knew that he himself had been the recipient of that special favor—those "stripes" which bound him to Jesus in an unbreakable bond of gratitude and fellowship.

A comment in the *Interpreter's Bible* on verses 22—24 gives a timely thought on Christ's death: "Here is no cold systematic credo concerning the Atonement which stands by itself, isolated from life. Peter is a Christian who scrupulously relates reality to action, truth to life, the work of atonement [we would say, at-one-ment] to the daily work and attitude of the Christian. The life of the Christian is not only inaugurated by the great Redeemer; it is guided by Him. The way in which Christ saved men is exemplary, and we are to follow in His steps by living and working in whatever situation we find ourselves."

The author then quotes a verse of the hymn by Thomas Shepherd:

Must Jesus bear the cross alone,
And all the world go free?
No, there's a cross for every one,
And there's a cross for me.

Only such an attitude and such conduct will be accepted by God. To bear the cross of Christ, to live as He lived and suffer as He suffered, such a life

will bring the highest commendation men can receive. Peter would emphasize this truth, for it grew out of his own experience. To obey God rather than man was the supreme principle of his life. We have no right to sing, "In the Cross of Christ I Glory," unless we are willing to add, "By whom the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world."

First Peter 3:18 belongs to the same category as chapter 2:24. Christ bore the treatment of a sinner. This text refers to His death but says nothing of His blood. "For Christ also once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh, but quickened by the Spirit." As in the context in I Pet. 2:24, Peter was warning against discouragement those who should suffer for well-doing, using Christ's experience as an example. Verse 16 speaks of Christians suffering as evildoers, and verse 17: "For it is better, if the will of God be so, that ye suffer for well doing, than for evil doing." Then follows the statement in verse 18 about Christ suffering when He had done no evil.

Romans 5:6 is often put forward as picturing the scarlet thread. "For when ye were yet without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly." By employing the qualifying term provided by Peter we learn how Christ died for the ungodly. "For even hereunto were ye called: because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that ye should follow his steps" (I Pet. 2:21). Christ died as an example that we should follow His steps. He died to sin, and it is for us to do likewise.

The tenth verse of Romans 5 gives an insight into Paul's understanding of the virtue of Christ's death on the cross: "For if, when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, much more, being reconciled, we shall be saved by his life." Our reconciliation is credited to Christ's death, our salvation to His life—and salvation is our chief quest.

Blood—Meaning Life

Other texts which may seem to point to some efficacy in the shed blood of Christ are the following: I John 1:7: "But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin"; Eph. 1:7: "In whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace"; Col. 1:14: "In whom we have redemption through his blood, even the forgiveness of sins"; I Pet. 1:2: "Elect according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, through sanctification of the Spirit, unto

obedience and the sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ."

The term blood is often used figuratively in the Bible. Sometimes it pictures life, other times death. Leviticus 17:11 reads, "For the life of the flesh is in the blood." Leviticus 19:16 employs the term "blood" in the same way: "You shall not go up and down as a slanderer among your people, and you shall not stand forth against the life of your neighbor..." (RSV). The Authorized Version employs the term "blood": "stand against the blood of thy neighbor."

Habakkuk 2:12 speaks of murder as "blood": "Woe to him that buildeth a town with blood." The word is used in the same sense referring to Pilate when he said, "I am innocent from the blood of this just person" (Matt. 27:24).

As we have seen, there can be no efficacy in the literal blood of Christ: 1) There was never enough of it to accomplish anything; 2) physical blood could do nothing toward cleansing a wicked man's character; 3) the blood of the sacrificial animal could not take away sins, and the physical blood of the most righteous man could do no more; 4) the term "blood" is used in metonymy for the *word* or *life* of Christ.

Now let us re-quote our four texts replacing the term "blood" with the words "life" or "word." But if we walk in the light as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the [word, or life] of Jesus...cleanseth us from all sin." "In whom we have redemption through his [word, or life] the forgiveness of sins." Once again: "In whom we have redemption through his [His word, or life]" etc.; "...through sanctification of the Spirit, unto obedience and the sprinkling of the [word] of Jesus Christ." The sprinkling of the Word or the life-pattern of Jesus Christ. The thought of sprinkling doubtless was referring to the sprinkling of the blood under the Mosaic law, but now the Word of God is sprinkled upon the believer from the sayings of the prophets, Jesus and the apostles.

Washed in the Blood of the Lamb

Sponsors of the theory of the scarlet thread running all through the Bible feel they find support for their theory in the texts relating to the blood of the Lamb. Revelation 1:5 is one of these texts: "And from Jesus Christ, who is the faithful witness, and the first begotten of the dead, and the prince of the kings of the earth. Unto him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood." As we already observed, it is doubtful that Jesus shed much blood on Calvary—certainly not enough to

wash a single person, to say nothing of the millions that rely on the efficacy of this agent. And neither Jesus nor His apostles gave any idea that His literal blood would save in any way. But we read in John 15:3, "Now ye are clean through the word which I have spoken unto you." The term "blood" is used figuratively.

Isaiah 1:16 reads: "Wash you, make you clean," How? "Put away the evil of your doings from before mine eyes." Ephesians 5:26 tells us, "That he [Christ] might sanctify and cleanse it [the church] with the washing of water by the word." The "faithful witness" will wash us from our sins in His own "blood," "water," or "word."

In John 6:53 Jesus said to the Jews: "Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of man, and drink his blood, ye have no life in you." The people, carnally minded, and thinking He was referring to His physical blood and flesh, objected to His statement. But Jesus answered: "It is the spirit that quickeneth; the flesh profiteth nothing: the words that I speak unto you, they are spirit, and they are life" (v. 63). Jesus spoke of His words, the words of His Heavenly Father, as His flesh and blood.

This approach brings relevance to the words of Rev. 7:14: "...These are they which... have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb." Let us note the incongruity of washing a literal robe in physical blood and having it come out white. Impossible! But if we make a spiritual application, all is plain and beautiful. Jesus said, "Now ye are clean through the word which I have spoken unto you." Paul adds, "That he might sanctify and cleanse it [the church] with the washing of water by the word." It is the Word of God which cleanses the character, not physical water, nor physical blood. The blood is but another term for the Word.

Hence when we read that Jesus washed us in His own blood (Rev. 1:5); or of the great number who "washed their robes and made them white, in the blood of the Lamb" (Rev. 7:14); or of those who overcame the "accuser" by "the blood of the Lamb" (Rev. 12:11); or of those who sing the new song, saying, "Thou art worthy to take the book, and open the seals thereof: for thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation" (Rev. 5:9), we do not have to picture the life-giving fluid that flows in the veins of every warm-blooded mammal.

In each case it is the life-giving Word of God that is indicated.

To the man who sees the scarlet thread running all through the Bible, the literal application seems

most logical. But to the man who sees the blood as figurative, the thought of physical blood as the key to salvation is as foreign as feathers to a fish. In place of seeing the old hymnbook approach of "There's power in the blood," he sees the pure, clear, Biblical truth: "The gospel is the power of God unto salvation" (Rom. 1:16); the Gospel is that "by which also ye are saved, if ye keep in memory what I preached unto you" (I Cor. 15:1, 2).

On the night of the first Lord's Supper, Jesus, after passing the cup to His disciples, said, "This cup is the new testament in my blood, which is shed for you" (Luke 22:20)—in my *life* which is shed or surrendered for you.

Our Sacrifice

Let us surrender our wills completely to the leading of our blessed Example. Let us hasten to die to everything of the flesh as He died, assured that to live with Him we must now die with Him. Let us reassure ourselves often that dying with Him is our only chance of living with Him in the world to come.

The things that are seen are temporal, only the things that are not seen are eternal. Let us show the good judgment to put first things first, to make the Kingdom of God and life in loyalty to Him, the object of all our endeavor, knowing that if we thus do, all the blessings of the world to come can be ours.

Now is the accepted time, now is the day of salvation. Let us work while the day lasts, for soon night cometh when no man can work. • •



Words to WALK By

If you would get God's best, see to it that He gets your best.

One life showing the way is better than ten tongues trying to tell it to you.

The man who says just what he thinks should learn to think.

The best way to get rid of a bad habit is to drop it.

Christianize your view of life and you will have nothing to fear.

Laws cannot be broken; we merely break ourselves against them.

Self-discipline is one of the foundation stones of character.

The KINGDOM--

Now or Future?

FROM A correspondent of Jehovah Witness conviction we have received the following letter. For the benefit of others who might share these beliefs, we would like to discuss a few salient points of Scriptural teaching, and encourage our friends to compare them carefully and candidly with the Word of God.

"A friend has written to me that 'the world's woes and violence now were foretold to accompany the establishment of the Kingdom in heaven.'

"I believe the Kingdom has already been established (Rev. 11:17, 18), and that the present turmoil is the wrathful reaction of the nations....

"The first project this Kingdom had was to clean Satan and his demons out of heaven and confine them to the earth. This is described in Rev. 12:10, 12: 'Now is come salvation, and strength, and the kingdom of our God, and the power of his Christ: for the accuser is cast down, which accused them before our God.... Therefore rejoice, ye heavens, and ye that dwell in them. Woe to the inhabitants of the earth and of the sea! for the devil is come down unto you, having great wrath, because he knoweth that he hath but a short time.'

"Bible prophecy pointed to the early autumn of the year 1914 as the time for Gentile domination of the earth to run out and God's Son to be throned as King."

In considering these thoughts, our first concern should be to harmonize and rightly divide the Word of God. To present isolated Scriptures merely to prove a theory accomplishes nothing.

The first part of the statement, that "the world's woes and violence now were foretold," is true, and harmonizes with Scripture (see II Tim. 3:1—4, 13). But when the writer adds that these woes and violence "were foretold to accompany the establishment of the Kingdom in heaven," that is not Biblical. The woes in the world were foretold to precede the establishment of God's kingdom *upon earth*. The Bible nowhere teaches that the Kingdom shall be established in heaven. The Lord's Prayer teaches the plan for the establishing of the Kingdom: "Thy kingdom come, thy will be done in earth as it is in heaven." The Kingdom will *come to earth*, not be set up in heaven. Revelation 5:9, 10 predicts that Christ and the saints shall reign "on the earth."

In Luke 21 Jesus gave us a preview of conditions that would prevail in this end time. He said, "And there shall be signs in the sun, and in the moon, and in the stars"—not literal sun, moon and stars, for the Bible speaks figuratively of the ruling groups of earth as the heavens, the more important nations as the "sun," "moon," or "stars," (see Isa. 1:2, 10).

Jesus then continues: "...and upon the earth distress of nations with perplexity; the sea and the waves roaring [figuratively speaking]: men's hearts failing them for fear, and for looking after those things which are coming on the earth: for the powers of heaven shall be shaken. And then shall they see the Son of man *coming* in a cloud with power and great glory." The forecast for this end time should terminate with the Son of man coming from heaven with power and great glory, not by His remaining at His Father's right hand in heaven.

Matthew's parallel account of Jesus' words terminates the forecast with this thought: "Who then

is a faithful and wise servant, whom his lord hath made ruler over his household, to give them meat in due season? Blessed is that servant, whom his lord when he cometh shall find so doing" (Matt. 24:45, 46). Christ is to come to His servants; He is to return to earth to dwell among men; not take His Bride or Church to heaven to be with Him.

Wrathful Reaction

Our friend refers to Rev. 11: 17, 18, suggesting that these verses are evidence of an already established Kingdom. But the comparsion seems purely superficial. Certainly these words shall be fulfilled after Christ returns. The time will come when God will take His great power and begin to reign, but considering the political, social and moral decadence of our world today, we cannot believe God or Christ has yet begun to reign.

When Jesus does come and demands of all mankind to submit to His new order, their reaction will be "wrathful." Revelation 19:19 reveals how wrathful they will be: "And I saw the beast, and the kings of the earth, and their armies, gathered together to make war against him that sat on the horse, and against his army." Psalm 2 forecasts that the nations will "rage," and Rev. 1:7 reveals the result of the struggle: When the Son of man "cometh with clouds, and every eye shall see him"—note that He will be *visible*—"all kindreds of the earth shall wail because of him," because they have lost out completely in their struggle against Christ's authority.

Christ vs. the Powers of Darkness

The letter then continues: "The first project this kingdom had was to clean Satan and his demons out of heaven and confine them to the earth. This is described in Rev. 12:10, 12." This statement is definitely *not* Scriptural. God never permitted any wicked depredations of a Satan or devil in any part of His finished heaven, in any area where His will is done completely. During Jesus' ministry He said, "Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God." If nineteen hundred years later a wicked creature is permitted to make trouble in His heaven, then heaven must have deteriorated over the centuries.

Much of the book of Revelation is figurative. In referring to Rev. 12:10, 12 to buttress the theory that a literal devil has come down to earth with great wrath, the writer infers that this is to be a literal occurrence.

Let us rationalize: Would you agree that the great "wonder" that appeared in heaven, "a woman clothed with the sun, and the moon under her

feet, and upon her head a crown of twelve stars" (verse 1) was literal? Could a physical woman reach those proportions?

Would you believe that John saw a literal "red dragon, having seven heads and ten horns, and seven crowns upon his head" (v. 3)? or that this "dragon" had a tail long enough to contact the third part of the stars of heaven, and cast them to the earth? It is estimated that in the galaxy which we call the Milky Way there are at least a hundred billion stars having the magnitude of our sun, plus the countless planets that orbit these suns. What a preposterous suggestion: one third of these falling upon our earth! What could there be left of the earth for the eternal home of the worthy glorified mortals which God has promised shall inhabit it?

Would you agree that a literal dragon stood before a literal woman about to be delivered of a man child, to devour her child as soon as it was born? And would the woman flee into a literal wilderness where she would be fed by God?

Certainly no reasonable person would say that the imagery of this chapter was intended to be understood literally. And if we are to study as Paul directed us, we must compare spiritual things with spiritual (I Cor. 2:13). We cannot assume one part of an illustration to be figurative and another part literal.

No reasonable person could conceive of a war in heaven where God dwells, as pictured in verses 7—9. Why then, should we suppose that verses 10 and 12 are to be understood literally? "And I heard a loud voice saying in heaven, Now is come salvation, and strength, and the kingdom of our God, and the power of his Christ: for the accuser of our brethren is cast down, which accused them before our God day and night. . . . Therefore rejoice, ye heavens, and ye that dwell in them. Woe to the inhabitants of the earth and of the sea! for the devil is come down unto you, having great wrath, because he knoweth he hath but a short time." No, we cannot accept this as literal and have our beliefs in harmony with the Word of God.

Revelation 12—A Symbolic Picture

Revelation 12 is picturing the work to be accomplished at Christ's personal return to earth. The woman of verse 1 is our "mother," the truth, Jerusalem from above, which is the "mother of us all" (Gal. 4:26, divine wisdom, which "is justified of all her children"—Luke 7:35). This mystical woman is clothed with the "sun," the words of Christ, the "Sun of righteousness"; her feet are planted on the "moon," the words of the prophets, the lesser light;

(Continued on page 19)

Eyes That SEE!

IT WAS the Sabbath in Jerusalem. From temple and synagogue worshipers were returning to their homes for the midday meal. Overhead the sun shone in its full glory, and the fresh aroma of spring-time carried by a gentle breeze enchanted young and old alike. Many slowed their pace that they might better enjoy the beauties about them. It was indeed a glorious day to be alive.

Sitting in the doorway of a shop near the temple was a man for whom the day had no visible beauty. The heat of the sun he felt; the perfume of nearby flowers he could smell; the bustle of activity about him he could hear; but the beauty of the temple, the trees and flowers he could not perceive. He was blind. Since birth he had moved about in a world of blackness, bereft of the blessing to which most of the passersby failed to give thought.

On this particular Sabbath he had stationed himself in a doorway which he had frequented for many years, hoping that a few of the passing worshipers might have pity on him and give alms. So far, the morning had not been very rewarding. But as he listened, his keen ears picked up the sound of approaching footsteps. From the volume, he thought there were several people coming his way. Louder and louder grew the footsteps, closer and closer, until the group were beside him. Would they continue on their way as had so many others?

No, thank God, they stopped. Eagerly he stretched out his hand, hoping for the familiar feel of a coin being dropped into his open palm. Instead he felt a hand touch his face and fingers applying something cool and moist to his sightless eyes. Then came strange words of instruction: "Go, wash in the pool of Siloam."

Doubting his hearing, yet overcome by a sense of urgency, he jumped to his feet. Aided by familiarity and years of practice he set off for the place he was told to go. In his haste he bumped into a passerby and several times stumbled and fell over objects which under times of less anxiety he carefully avoided. Soon he reached the street he was seeking. Carefully now he counted out to himself the required number of steps, one hundred, fifty, thirty, twenty. Oh, why did it take so long? Ten, five,

three, two, one. At last he reached the place. Falling to his knees he reached out to find the edge of the pool. Plunging his arms deep into the cool water he scooped up all that his hands would hold and splashed it on his eyes and face. Immediately—sight! His blind eyes were opened! This son of Solomon could see—he could see! *He could see!*

In open-mouthed wonder he gazed about him. There was the pool he had heard and felt—but seeing! bright, glorious, beautiful in the noonday sun. And there sparkled the ripples his hands had made. He looked around him. Behind him rose a hill covered with what must be trees. And to his right the beauty of the temple commanded his attention.

For several minutes he stood rooted to the spot, his eyes hungrily devouring all he saw. Then slowly he grew calmer and rational thought returned. An overwhelming feeling of gratitude and an urgent desire to meet and thank his benefactor gripped him, and with the aid of his new-found sight he retraced his steps to his familiar post near the temple.

We are all undoubtedly familiar with the miracle performed by Jesus that morning in Jerusalem and rejoice that vision was bestowed to the blind man. What a thrill it must have been for him to behold for the first time the light of the sun. But what of us who have always enjoyed the gift of vision? Do we really appreciate it as we should, or is it something we take for granted? If we would but realize it, every waking moment of the day presents us with the miracle of sight.

In this rushing twentieth century we would all do well to slow down a little and really use our eyes. Have you ever really taken the time to fully enjoy the beauty of the blazing colors of a sunrise or the fading hues of sunset? We are surrounded by stately trees, myriads of flowers, sparkling lakes and rivers, majestic mountains and peaceful valleys, beauties of autumn and glorious wonders of spring's rebirth. All this is the gift of a beneficent heavenly Father—do we appreciate it?

Consider also the glory of the heavens. Who of us has not at some time been intrigued by the spec-

tacle of fleecy clouds silhouetted against an emerald sky. And on a clear night, what a spectacle meets the eye! Before our wondering gaze countless stars twinkle and glitter in the vastness of space, a glorious tribute to the handiwork of the Creator, and one more reminder of the blessing of sight. Remember, but for the mercy of God we could be as sightless as was the blind beggar.

While we all possess a natural horror of losing our physical eyesight, there is another type of blindness which should cause us even greater concern—spiritual blindness. A person thus afflicted is completely oblivious and wholly unconcerned about his real self. Occasionally he may, as the thoughtful James puts it, look into the perfect law of liberty; but he soon goes on his way and forgets—or excuses—the image of the real man he saw. How different the behavior of the individual who

is completely honest in evaluating his true condition. “He looks carefully into the faultless law of liberty, and is faithful to it and perseveres in looking into it, being not a heedless listener who forgets, but an active doer who obeys” (James 1: 25, Amplified Bible). It is not always easy to admit, even to ourselves, that we possess certain evils, and the tendency to cover them over is strong. However, those spiritually alert will not try to hide the deformity but will eradicate it.

Just as surely as Jesus gave sight to the beggar, just so certainly can we be cured of spiritual blindness if we will diligently apply ourselves to the keeping of the commandments. For by so doing we will be accorded a place in God’s new world where physical blindness will be unknown and the eyes of a happy and holy populace will feast upon incomparable scenes of grandeur through eternity. ●●

Good . . . Better . . . *BEST*

LIFE IS a series of choices. Each day, each hour, each moment, we are choosing. We choose colors, foods, friends, words. We choose routes, methods, actions, thoughts. From the unconscious question, “Which bite of meat shall I take next from the helping on my plate?” to the tremendous problem with which the mind may wrestle in exhausting and repeated conflict through months or years, the mind is constantly judging, sorting, selecting. Many inconsequential decisions are left to the unconscious mind which chooses according as the conscious mind has taught it. But conscious or unconscious, important or trivial, your personality, your character is the sum total of your choices.

The Christian has many perplexing choices to make. The business of perfecting a character is not a simple matter; it is a complex problem. Once a person has made the big decision between good and evil, he is at once confronted with a wide selection of things labeled good, better, or best. Distinctions between good, better and best are not always apparent on the surface. What may appear to be a good and perfectly harmless course in itself may in time lead imperceptibly to a bypath. Though our choice may not actually be classified as evil, it is sure to bring us to some destination. Is it the best

course we could possibly find, or is it only a good course?

The carnal mind is rightly described as being deceitful above all things and more subtle than any beast of the field. Knowing this, we need not expect that it will openly suggest that we leave God and go with the world in the broad way. It is too subtle for that. Instead it lures us to deviate from the straight course only a fraction, a hairsbreadth at a time, by reasoning like this: “Surely this little thing cannot be a sin, therefore it must be all right for me to do.” Many a well-intentioned Christian has unintentionally followed such logic to his destruction.

Paul felt this insidious persuasion in his own mind and he conquered it with this reasoning: “All things are lawful, but all things are not beneficial; all things are lawful, but not all things build up” (I Cor. 10:23, Wilson’s *Emphatic Diaglott*). Of all the things he could have done, he chose only those things which were constructive. That was the test he applied in every situation: Is this the *very best* thing to do?

There are many activities in this world which are not evil, but their danger lies in the fact that neither are they solely constructive. They will not

bring us closer to our goal. This is reason enough for a wise man to avoid them. He has no time for good things, nor even better things; he is afraid of everything but the *best*. Our daily actions must be guided by deeper considerations than the mere question, "Is this a sin, or is it not a sin?" Was it a sin for Martha to prepare a meal for Jesus? She simply did not see what her sister understood, that all our choices are not between good and evil; many times we must choose between good and best. Mary was not to be beguiled by anything less than the best.

It is well to remember that while the good course may not actually carry the name "Sin," the careful Christian will always choose the best selection, and walk the guideline down the center of the narrow way, crowding neither to the right hand nor to the left, never approaching the margin of danger.

Many times we fret and chafe at restrictions which seem to us to be unnecessary. This only reveals our shortsightedness. Considered alone, such small divergences may appear innocent enough; but we cannot set any act in a place by itself and judge whether it be a wise act or an unwise act. For everything we do is closely interwoven with a long string of reactions and results. To determine the value of the thing we are judging we must look closely at the whole scheme and consider the possible end of the matter.

Will this strengthen my willpower or weaken it?

Will it draw me closer to the family of God?

Am I putting the things that matter most at the mercy of the things that matter least?

Will this course place me in the best possible advantage for spiritual growth, or will it be loosening my spiritual tension—ever so slightly?

We might list a number of activities that involve no definite transgression of a law of God, but the question is always, Is it the best for me in my situation? Some people enjoy fishing, some enjoy hunting, some enjoy traveling, gardening, reading, singing or music. But in all these interests we must never allow the good to crowd out the best.

Careless reading is an ever-present danger. Anyone who loves to read must be on a constant guard lest he find himself reading something that is humorous, or just a little shady or suggestive. Some reading material might be interesting and informative; but while not especially harmful, it might not be the best for our spiritual growth, hence could not be read to God's glory. We must be ready to exchange the good for the better, and the better for the best. We have much at stake—how tragic if just for some petty satisfaction in this life we forfeit our right to eternal life!

Paul's words in II Timothy 2 warn against indulging in any activity that would too completely absorb our time and interest. Would it be wise to take the chance of losing life eternal by engaging in some pleasurable pursuit that might be so absorbing as to partly eclipse the glory of our quest for life eternal?

We are living at the very close of a six-thousand year period. The incomparable things which God has planned for the earth and mankind, events to which prophets and sages and holy men and women of old looked forward with eager anticipation—but from which they were separated by millenniums of time—are now at our very doorstep. We are the most favored people of the ages. As Jesus said to His immediate followers, "Blessed are the eyes which what ye see, and the ears which hear what ye hear." We are living in the most momentous era of the history of our earth. Why should we not gladly forgo the lesser satisfactions of life for benefits that are infinitely greater?

Former President Theodore Roosevelt had been an Army man, and had a strong leaning toward military adventures. At the outbreak of World War I, he made an effort to enlist young men for an expeditionary force to go overseas and fight the aggressor Germany. In an address before a group of young men whom he hoped to enflame with the same passion that he had, he made the following statement: "Once this war has ended it will be much easier to explain why you enlisted and helped on with the war than to explain why you didn't."

Likewise, when we stand face to face with the glories that could be ours had we sacrificed for them, it will be easier to explain why we made an all-out effort and won, than it will be to explain why we clung to self and lost!

Fellow Christians, let us forgo the good for the better, and the better for the *very best*! • •

Gratitude

*O Thou, whose bounty fills my cup
With every blessing meet!
I give Thee thanks for every drop—
The bitter and the sweet.
I praise Thee for the desert road,
And for the riverside;
For all Thy goodness hath bestowed
And all Thy grace denied.*

—Selected.

UNDERSTANDING THE BIBLE

"Study to shew thyself approved unto God."

The Hell of the Bible

"THE DEVIL is waiting for them, hell is gaping for them, the flames gather and flash about them... When you come to be a firebrand of hell... you will appear as you are, a viper indeed... Then will you as a serpent spit poison at God and vent your rage and malice in fearful blasphemies." These words from Jonathan Edwards, describe the place of torment which was very real and very fearful to eighteenth century theologians.

But thank God, the darkness is past and the true light now shines—the Bible is not responsible for such superstition.

We shall continue our study of the Hell of the Bible, following our outline:

- II. The Hell of the Bible
 - B. Hell in the New Testament
- III. The Punishment of the Wicked
 - A. Who Will Be Punished?
 - B. What is the Punishment?

God is reasonable and just, and will reward every man "according to his works."

II. THE HELL OF THE BIBLE

We have learned that "hell," represented by **Sheol** in the Old Testament, and **Hades or Gehenna** in the New Testament, meant simply the abode of the dead to the people living in Bible times. But the conception of hell was gradually elaborated upon until it meant a place of unspeakable terror, torment and punishment for the wicked. By the time the Scriptures were translated into English, this doctrine had become firmly established and the translators seemingly used every opportunity available to sentence the wicked to hell by freely translating **Sheol, Hades and Gehenna** as "hell." In the minds of the translators, the continual fires of Gehenna which consumed the refuse of the city represented the fires of hell, a fire that burned but did not consume, a means of punishment for the sinner. But such a conclusion is inconsistent.

B. Hell in the New Testament

4. **Gehenna as used by Jesus.** Gehenna was a deep ravine just outside the ancient city of Jerusalem which was used as a place for disposing of the refuse of the city. To assure the complete destruction of all that was cast into it, fires were kept burning continually. **Gehenna** became known as a symbol of destruction, but only that which was worthless was destroyed.

The people of Jesus' day were well acquainted with Gehenna and its purpose, hence they would easily understand the usage of the word. Because all that was consigned to **Gehenna** was utterly destroyed, its use would provide a forceful illustration. On hearing the word **Gehenna**, the thought of torture, torment or punishment would not enter their minds; destruction, annihilation would be their thought.

The Greek word **Gehenna**, in each instance translated "hell," appears eleven times in the Gospels. We will review its use briefly.

a. **In the Sermon on the Mount.** Jesus' first recorded use of Gehenna appears in Matt. 5:22: "Whosoever shall say, Thou fool, shall be in danger of hell [Gehenna] fire." The Valley of Hinnom, known as Gehenna, was not far from the mountain where Jesus spoke these words. Certainly no one hearing Him at the time would have thought of eternal torment. Rather, they would be quick to associate His words with destruction because that which was consigned to Gehenna was destroyed, not tormented or tortured.

Jesus used the word **Gehenna** twice more in His Sermon on the Mount. "And if thy right eye offend thee, pluck it out, and cast it from thee: for it is profitable for thee that one of thy members should perish, and not that thy whole body should be cast into hell [Gehenna]." And in the following verse He used a similar illustration concerning the hands (Matt. 5:29, 30). These words of Jesus are easily recognized as symbolic, since no one would think it necessary to literally remove an eye or a limb to escape eternal torment. He is using the eye and the hand as symbols of things that might seem of great value to us, but which are, in comparison to gaining

eternal life in the Kingdom of God, of little worth. In other words, it would be better to give up all our earthly possessions, if necessary, than to lose our eternal life.

In Mark 9:43—47 we find the same lesson which Jesus taught in the above verses but with the addition of the phrase: "Where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched." Supporters of the theory of eternal torment find in this what they call "irrefutable proof" of a burning hell. But we cannot believe such a meaning was intended. (Can we imagine immortal worms?) Jesus was adding emphasis to the lesson of making whatever sacrifice is necessary to gain the Kingdom.

The "fire" is that of Gehenna. Anything that reached the fires of Gehenna was sure to be destroyed, so the fire was said to be "unquenchable." Fire in the Bible is symbolic of destruction. The fire of God's judgments will burn until all the material is consumed. This fire is unquenchable because it is beyond human control, but the judgments of God are within His control.

According to the **Interpreter's Bible** the verses in question constitute an "Oriental hyperbole" (an exaggerated figure of speech) and teach that one must at all cost remove from one's life anything which will lead to sin. Entrance into the Kingdom of God is so great a prize, so immeasurable a gain, that anything which might prevent that, no matter how good it might even be in itself, should be ruthlessly sacrificed.

In Matthew 18:8, 9, Jesus is teaching the same lesson He presented in the Sermon on the Mount. In verse 8 He speaks of being "cast into everlasting fire," and in verse 9 of being "cast into hell [Gehenna] fire." The lesson taught is identical with that of Matt. 5:29, 30. "Gehenna fire" and "everlasting fire" are used to express the same thought. No continuing fire or torment is intended. **Fire is a symbol of destruction**, and that which is burned is eventually consumed. "Everlasting fire" would simply denote "everlasting destruction," death from which there is no resurrection.

b. In His instructions to the Apostles. Jesus was conditioning the twelve apostles for whatever persecution might befall them when He said: "Fear not them which kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul: but rather fear him which is able to destroy both soul and body in hell [Gehenna]" (Matt. 10:28). Again Jesus was not suggesting punishment or torment, but destruction. Notice the verse reads "destroy... in hell," not preserve for the purpose of torture.

The same narrative as recorded in Luke's Gospel is as follows: "And I say unto you my friends, Be

not afraid of them that kill the body, and after that have no more that they can do. But I will forewarn you whom ye shall fear: Fear him, which after he hath killed hath power to cast into hell [Gehenna]; yea, I say unto you, Fear him" (Luke 12:4, 5). Jesus' real meaning was to have no fear of them that can take away your temporal life, but fear God who can destroy eternally. The disciples need not fear martyrdom; only God's judgments need be feared.

Wilson's Emphatic Diaglott translates Matt. 10:28, "Fear not him which is able to kill the body, but is not able to kill the future life." (The term "soul" is not included.)

c. In His denunciation of the scribes and Pharisees. In Matthew 23 Jesus had harsh words for the hypocritical scribes and Pharisees. He addressed them thus: "Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye compass sea and land to make one proselyte, and when he is made, ye make him twofold more the child of hell [Gehenna] than yourselves" (v. 15). Throughout the chapter Jesus is upbraiding the scribes and Pharisees for their wrongdoings, but nowhere in His discourse is there any suggestion of eternal torture or eternal punishment. Jesus is telling them in this verse that they are so far removed from the true teachings of God that should they convert anyone to their faith, the convert would also be subject to destruction. In the following verse He referred to them as "blind guides," and in an earlier chapter He had said: "And if the blind lead the blind, both shall fall into the ditch" (Matt. 15:14). In other words, **both would be subject to destruction.**

In Matthew 23:33, Jesus again addresses the scribes and Pharisees, calling them a "generation of vipers," and adds (as translated in our common version), "how can ye escape the damnation of hell [Gehenna]?" Here again the translators used their license to condemn the wicked Pharisees to what they thought was their just deserts, a burning hell, and to make the condemnation even more severe, they termed it the "damnation of hell."

Newer translations of the Bible render the phrase thus: "How shall you escape the judgment of hell?" (Living Letters); "How are you to escape being sentenced to hell?" (RSV); "How can you escape being condemned to hell?" (NEB); "How can you escape being sentenced to the pit?" (Good-speed). None of these give any idea of damnation such as is implied in the King James Version. Jesus was simply condemning the scribes and Pharisees to eternal death, utter destruction, unless they amended their evil ways. Their sentence was comparable to that given the wicked servants in Matt.

25:46: "And these shall go away into everlasting punishment: but the righteous into life eternal." Everlasting punishment would be simply everlasting destruction, the fate of those who do not walk in His ways (Matt. 7:13, 14).

5. **Gehenna in apostolic times.** The word **Gehenna**, translated "hell," appears only once in the New Testament beyond the Gospels. This fact in itself offers evidence that hellfire was not being taught by the apostles. Its use by the apostle James lends no support to the eternal torment theory. The verse reads: "And the tongue is a fire, a world of iniquity: so is the tongue among our members, that it defileth the whole body, and setteth on fire the course of nature; and it is set on fire of hell [Gehenna]" (Jas. 3:6). When we understand the meaning of Gehenna as a symbol of destruction, we can readily understand James' meaning. The untamed tongue, says James, "is an unruly evil, full of deadly poison." Our words can bring about our own destruction; they can lead to death, eternal death, for "out of the abundance of the heart, the mouth speaketh" (Matt. 12:34).

6. **Tartarus.** Translated "hell" in II Peter 2:4, **Tartarus** originated in Greek mythology. It was "a deep and sunless abyss; according to Homer and the earlier Greek mythology, as far below Hades as earth is below heaven. It was closed by Adamantive gates and in it Zeus imprisoned the rebel Titans. Later poets describe Tartarus as the place in which the spirits of the wicked receive their due punishment, and sometimes the name is used as synonymous with Hades for the lower world in general."

Tartarus, as used in the verse in question, means simply the grave or realm of the dead. The verse reads: "For if God spared not the angels that sinned, but cast them down to hell [Tartarus], and delivered them into chains of darkness. . . ." In the Greek and Hebrew languages the word angel signified a "messenger, an envoy, generally one that announces or tells." Hence, the angels here referred to would not have to be immortal angels from the heavenly realm. They were men who had held a high position, but because of their disobedience they were cast down. They died and are waiting in the grave until the Resurrection and Judgment.

III. THE PUNISHMENT OF THE WICKED

The Scriptures are explicit concerning the punishment of the wicked or evil servants. God's message to His people from the beginning was that sin would be punished. Through Moses He said to Israel: "When thou shalt . . . do evil in the sight of the Lord thy God, . . . ye shall soon utterly perish from off the

land whereunto ye go over Jordan to possess it; ye shall not prolong your days upon it, but shall utterly be destroyed" (Deut. 4:25, 26). God's law has not changed. It is still the same: obey and live, disobey and die.

We have presented convincing evidence that hell is not a place of fire or torment; that all men, good and bad, sleep in the grave until the Master returns to call His own servants to account. We will go to the Bible to learn who will be punished and what the punishment will be.

A. Who Will Be Punished?

God will not bring to Judgment all who ever lived upon this earth; only His servants, those who agreed to serve Him, will be judged and recompensed. In the parable of the Talents, the man "called his own servants, and delivered unto them his goods." And "after a long time the lord of those servants cometh, and **reckoneth with them**" (Matt. 25:14, 19). His servants are those who agreed to serve Him. After Moses had read the "book of the covenant" to the people, they said: "All that the Lord hath said will we do, and be obedient" (Ex. 24:7). **After we have learned God's law and agreed to keep it, we are one of His servants and amenable to judgment; we have made a covenant with Him.**

As we learned in our study, "**The Nature of Man,**" there is a class that will never be raised to stand in Judgment. (See **Megiddo Message**, Feb. 1971, page 15—**Who will rise?**). God will not raise from the dead and punish those who never heard of Him, those who never agreed to serve Him.

B. What Is the Punishment for Sins?

The reward for evil is described in various ways in the Scriptures. The wicked are said to be **cut off, cut down, perished, destroyed, rooted out, removed, punished**—all of which add up to the same sum: **destruction, eternal death.** None of these terms give any indication of continuing punishment or torment; the destruction of the wicked will be complete.

1. **Eternal death.** "**The wages of sin is death**" (Rom. 6:23). These six words best sum up the reward for evil.

Other Scripture writers agree with the apostle Paul. **Isaiah** said: "Behold, the day of the Lord cometh, cruel both with wrath and fierce anger, to lay the land desolate: and **he shall destroy the sinners thereof out of it . . . For, behold, the Lord cometh out of his place to punish the inhabitants of the earth for their iniquity**" (Isa. 13:9; 26:21).

Ezekiel said: "The soul that sins **shall die**" (Ezek. 18:4, NEB).

The **Psalmist** said "...evildoers shall be **cut off**. ...the workers of iniquity...shall soon be **cut down** like the grass and wither as the green herb. ...when the **wicked are cut off**, thou shalt see it (Ps. 37:9, 2, 1, 34).

The **Preacher** said: "The wicked shall be **cut off** from the earth, and the transgressors shall be **rooted out** of it...it shall not be well with the wicked" (Prov. 2:22; Eccl. 8:13).

New Testament writers were equally explicit: **Jesus** said: "Wide is the gate, and broad is the way, that leadeth to **destruction**, and many there be which go in thereat" (Matt. 7:13).

James said: "...sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth **death**" (Jas. 1:15).

Peter said: "The Lord knoweth how to deliver the godly out of temptations, and to reserve the unjust unto the day of judgment to be **punished**" (II Pet. 2:9).

Paul said: "And to you who are troubled rest with us, when the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with his mighty angels, in flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God [refuse to acknowledge God (NEB)], and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ: **Who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord**, and from the glory of his power" (II Thess. 1:7-9).

John the Revelator said: "But the fearful, and unbelieving, and the abominable, and murderers, and whoremongers, and sorcerers, and idolaters, and all liars, shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone: **which is the second death**" (Rev. 21:8).

2. **Just retribution.** God has decreed that the punishment will be according to a man's works. Thus we find a class that must perform a duty for the Lord before being sentenced to eternal death, that of subduing the world and bringing it under the control of Christ. To do this, Christ must have an army, termed as His "**sword**" in Rev. 19:15. From Psalm 17:13 we learn more about this sword: "Deliver my soul from the wicked, which is thy sword." The wicked or unfaithful servants, those who promised to serve Him and did not fulfill their vow, make up this "**sword**" which is pictured as proceeding from His mouth "that with it he should smite the nations" (Rev. 19:15).

Through Moses God revealed His demand upon these unworthy servants: "Because thou servedst not the Lord thy God with joyfulness, and with gladness of heart, for the abundance of all things; therefore shalt thou serve thine enemies which the

Lord shall send against thee" (Deut. 28:47, 48). Because they failed to serve Him during their lifetime as they had agreed, when in His love He pleaded with them to leave their worldly ways and work for Christ and His kingdom, they are now compelled to serve.

We learn of this army from Isaiah also: "I have given my warriors their orders and summoned my fighting men to launch my anger [judgments]; they are eager for my triumph. Hark, a tumult in the mountains, the sound of a vast multitude; hark, the roar of kingdoms, of nations gathering! The Lord of Hosts is mustering a host for war, men from a far country, from beyond the horizon. The Day of the Lord is coming indeed, that cruel day of wrath and fury, to make the land a desolation and exterminate its wicked people. I will bring disaster upon the world and their due punishment upon the wicked" (Isa. 13:3, 4, 9, 11, NEB).

This war will be different from wars as we know them: it will be a righteous war (Rev. 19:11), thus there will not be suffering. The life of the unfaithful who make up the army will be prolonged until they have fulfilled their duty; then they will be cut off. Their suffering will be mental; it will consist of seeing the faithful in the Kingdom and they themselves cast out. **Eternal death in the grave, the hell of the Bible, will be their portion.**

To be a messenger you must know the message.

TEST YOURSELF

1. What is the hell of theology?
2. What is the hell of the Bible?
3. What is the Hebrew word sometimes translated "hell" in the Old Testament? By what three English words is it translated?
4. What three Greek words are translated "hell" in the New Testament?
5. Compare the use of **Sheol** in Gen. 37:35 and in Psalm 16:10.
6. What is the meaning of **Gehenna**?
7. What is the torment which the Rich Man experiences in Jesus' parable?
8. Explain the use of "hell" in Rev. 20:13, 14.
9. In what sense is the fire "unquenchable"?
10. Explain the use of "fire" in Matt. 5:29, 30.
11. What is the derivation of "**Tartarus**"?
12. What is to be the punishment of the wicked?
13. Define the "**sword**" of the Lord.

Reprints of these studies are available upon request.

THE SABBATH

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

The Law of Moses—Moral or Ceremonial?

IN AN effort to prove that the Sabbath law is still binding upon Christians today, sabbatarians divide the law of Moses into two parts: ceremonial law and moral. The moral portion is the Ten Commandments, the written portion carved on the tablets of stone; the ceremonial law is the rest of the law of Moses, including all sacrifices, rituals, ceremonies, and feast days. This latter part, the ceremonial law, they admit, was done away. But the former—the Decalog—was a perpetual covenant to be remembered and observed by all generations of all people. And the Sabbath, being the fourth commandment, is still binding.

But is this position Scriptural? First let us ask, What is the origin of the terms “moral” and “ceremonial”? Where do they occur in Scripture?

The answer is, *Nowhere*. No inspired writer ever makes any distinction between moral and ceremonial law.

If the Bible is silent on the subject, where does moral law end and ceremonial begin? Who can determine?

God wants us to reason. So let us ask: Is not every law God ever gave a *moral* law? Is not obedience to the ceremonies of the law of Moses a moral duty if that law is in force? Would it not be just as immoral for an Israelite to offer strange fire unto the Lord as to break the Sabbath? Read the account of the disobedient sons of Aaron in Leviticus 10. Wasn't their conduct immoral? And wasn't their offense punished as such?

Truly there were ceremonies in the law of Moses, but they were all moral, so far as Israel was concerned. Israel was morally obligated to obey the

law of Moses, whatever that law entailed, to fulfill their covenant with God. They promised: “All that the Lord hath said will we do and be obedient” (Ex. 24:7). They agreed to perfect obedience; therefore, not one commandment—whatever its nature—could be broken with impunity. Not only the Ten Commandments but all the laws given to Moses for the children of Israel were binding upon them.

If we were to take the Adventists' position that everything in the Pentateuch is ceremonial except the Decalog, how should we classify the following:

“Ye shall be holy: for I the Lord your God am holy” (Lev. 19:2).

“Put not thine hand with the wicked to be an unrighteous witness. Thou shalt not follow a multitude to do evil” (Ex. 23:1, 2).

“Ye shall do no unrighteousness in judgment; thou shalt not respect the person of the poor, nor honour the person of the mighty” (Lev. 19:15).

“Thou shalt not hate thy brother in thine heart: thou shalt in any wise rebuke thy neighbour, and not suffer sin upon him. Thou shalt not avenge, nor bear any grudge against the children of thy people, but thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself: I am the Lord” (Lev. 19:17, 18).

“And thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy might. And these words, which I command thee this day, shall be in thine heart” (Deut. 6:5, 6). These last two commands were classified by Jesus as the greatest commandments in the law.

Not one of these commandments is mentioned in the Decalog, yet are they not moral? Are they not part of every Christian's responsibility before God?

The Adventists' division between “moral” and “ceremonial” is founded wholly on assumption.

Two laws cannot be made out of one law of Moses. The Decalog was partly "moral" and partly "ceremonial." Likewise, the book of the law was partly ceremonial, but containing scores of moral precepts. Yet *all* was the moral law of Israel—it had to be obeyed.

The Sabbath—Moral or Ceremonial?

Consider the Sabbath. Its basis might be considered moral: It prevented the oppression of slaves; it set aside for every man time for special service and worship to God, for spiritual renewal as well as bodily rest. As Jesus said, "the sabbath was made for man" (Mark 2:27)—because he needed it physically, mentally, socially, morally and spiritually.

But when we come to setting aside a definite and particular day, and when we consider all the laws and penalties which accompanied that day under the law of Moses, we come to what we must call ceremony.

Paul Cotton, in his book *From Sabbath to Sunday*, makes the point conclusively: "It must be distinctly realized at the outset that the Sabbath was an integral part of Jewish ceremonial law. Together with circumcision it formed the heart of the Jewish ceremonial system. These two rites were the distinctive badges of Judaism, the marks of distinction from the Gentile world. This day was filled with ceremonies. On the Sabbath, as well as on new moons and at the appointed feasts, there was a special burnt offering (Num. 28:9, 10). The showbread was prepared for every Sabbath (I Chron. 9:32, see New Catholic edition). Of all the ceremonies in the life of the Hebrew nation, none other held such a distinctive place as the Sabbath. Their religious rites centered about this one day."

He says further of the Sabbath laws: "In estimating the place of the Sabbath among the Jews, we should emphasize not only its ceremonial but also its political character. Judaism was not a religion merely for individuals. It was for a group of individuals. It was not a private but a State religion. For Judaism, Church and State were one. The laws of the Sabbath must therefore be considered not for their salutary effects upon the religious life of the individual alone but for their benefits to the total well-being of the State. . . . A nation must have laws. In the theocracy of Israel, these were merely laws of the State for governing the citizens. These laws must be detailed, controlling every phase of life." The laws of Moses were the political laws of the nation, and the Sabbath was part of their detail. "The Sabbath itself, as it was con-

ducted among the Jews, was filled with ceremonial, being really the center of the Jewish ceremonial system and forming in effect a ceremonial law."†

No Day Is Holy By Nature

God Himself marked no difference in the nature of days, that one should be considered holy and another not. As far as men are able to observe, every day is made alike. We see nothing in one day of the week which differs from another, and there is no difference. No day is holy in and of itself. To have a holy day, God had to make it holy by special appointment. "The same appointment of some other day would have made it just as holy."‡

And a further observation is possible: A day once appointed is not necessarily a permanent, unchangeable affair. A day once appointed and made a holy sabbath day by God Himself may cease to be such and, through misuse, may even become hateful to Him. For example: "Come no more with your meaningless offerings! Incense is abominable to Me; [likewise] the new moon and sabbath, the convoking of the assembly; I cannot endure iniquity and a solemn assembly! My soul hates your new moon festival and appointed seasonal feasts; they have become a burden on Me; I am weary of bearing them" (Isa. 1:13, 14, Berkeley). These were God's own appointed days, but He says, "It is iniquity, even the solemn meeting"—nothing was there but hypocrisy.

Prohibition and Penalty

Let us now note another part of the Sabbath law: its penalty. If within twenty-four hours any burden was carried (Jer. 17:21), or any fire kindled (Ex. 35:3), or any wood gathered (Num. 15:32—36), or any cooking or baking done (Ex. 16:23), the penalty was death. The law was definite: "Ye shall keep the sabbath therefore; for it is holy unto you: every one that defileth it shall surely be put to death: for whosoever doeth any work therein, that soul shall be cut off from among his people" (Ex. 31:14).

Here is stated the penalty for disobedience: "Every one that defileth it shall surely be put to death." Does this part of the Sabbath law apply today? Sabbatarians say not, but of what value is a law without its penalty? Jesus said that not "one jot" or "one tittle" could pass from the law until *all* had been fulfilled. This being true, either the Sab-

† Paul Cotton, *From Sabbath to Sunday*, pp. 11ff.

‡ D. M. Canright, *Seventh-Day Adventism Renounced*, pp. 168ff.

bath law has been abolished *with* its penalty, or else *both remain*. But what text tells us that the penalty for Sabbath-breaking has been abolished and that the Sabbath law remains? And if the Sabbath law is still binding, is not the man who kindles a fire on the Sabbath just as deserving of punishment as the man who observes the first day instead of the seventh?

The Whole Law

When Paul spoke of "the law" he meant the

* Seventh-Day Adventists construe Paul's words in II Cor. 3:6-10 to show that the penalty—which they say is the meaning of the "ministration of death"—was done away in Christ, but that the original law to observe the Sabbath remains. However, this seems to take the passage out of its connection. Paul says the "ministration of death" was "written and engraven in stones"; but according to the enumeration of Ex. 20 and Deut. 5, where the laws "written and engraven in stones" are listed, the death penalty is *not mentioned*. Therefore, if the "ministration of death" refers only to the penalty of the law and not to the law itself, that ministration was *not* "written and engraven in stones," as the text reads.

whole law of Moses. This law is mentioned in the Bible under different terms, just as is the gospel of Christ. As we say, Preach the Gospel; preach Christ; preach the Cross; preach the Word; preach the Truth; preach the Kingdom of God—they are only so many different ways of saying the same thing. So also: The law, the law of Moses, the law from Sinai, the book of the law, etc., are only so many different ways of saying the same thing. First Kings 2:3 speaks of "his commandments, and his judgments, and his testimonies, as it is written in the law of Moses." In II Chron. 33:8 we read of the "whole law and the statutes and the ordinances by the hand of Moses." "The *whole* law"—where is the separation between "moral" and "ceremonial"? Ezra 7:6 refers to the "law of Moses, which the Lord God of Israel had given." How can the Decalog be separated? Sabbatarians claim that the "law of Moses," or the "law of Sinai" has been abolished, but how can the Decalog remain?

(To be continued next issue)

The Kingdom Now or Future?

(Continued from page 9)

and her head is crowned with twelve stars, the words of the Apostles of the Lamb. The time is coming for this woman to bring forth a "man child," composed of the faithful of the six thousand years.

The war that ensues when this man child is born of the spirit, born into a new life—immortality—will terminate with the devil and Satan, sin and all sinners, being cast out of the political heavens, reduced to the humble position of the common people. Then will be fulfilled verse 12: "Therefore rejoice, ye heavens [the new heavens, composed of Christ and His saints], and ye that dwell in them. Woe to the inhabitants of the earth and of the sea! for the devil is come down unto you, having great wrath, because he knoweth he hath but a short time." This will be fulfilled when the kings of the earth gather together to make war with Him who sits on the horse, and against His army (Rev. 19:19).

Our friend closes his letter with the following statement: "Bible prophecy pointed to the early autumn of the year 1914 as the time for Gentile domination of the earth to run out and God's Son to be throned as King."

The increase of trouble, world wars, famines, pestilences, etc., offers very poor evidence of the reign of Christ upon earth, whether He reigns from heaven or upon earth itself. And the Bible offers no support for the theory. I am reminded of Elijah's taunt to the prophets of Baal on Mount Carmel when for a whole day they tried vainly to induce their gods to send fire and burn their sacrifice: "Cry aloud: for he is a god; either he is talking, or he is pursuing, or he is in a journey, or peradventure he sleepeth, and must be awakened." If what has taken place on earth since 1914 is an evidence of the reign of Christ, one cannot but wonder what those years would have been like in the absence of Christ's reign.

No religious group has any Scriptural authority to establish 1914 as the termination of Gentile times. Jesus said authoritatively, "Ye know not the time." Pastor Russell and his adherents have done much to add to the religious confusion by unfounded claims that Christ will never appear in person upon earth, that His reign will be from heaven, and that that reign began in 1914. Had they rather admitted their error and continued to look and plan to receive Christ when He does come, they could have alerted many people to the truth of Christ's personal appearance, and helped in sounding the midnight cry, "Behold, the bridegroom cometh, go ye out to meet him." ● ●

NO SMOKING!

Why?

1 (I Corinthians 10:31).

"Whatsoever ye do, do ALL to the GLORY of God." The use of tobacco is not glorifying God.

2 (John 17:14).

Here Jesus said of His disciples: "They are NOT of the WORLD, even as I am NOT OF THE WORLD." Using tobacco is a worldly habit.

3 (II Corinthians 7:1).

"Let us cleanse OURSELVES from A-L-L FILTHINESS OF THE FLESH." No one can chew tobacco and say, "I have cleansed myself from ALL filthiness of the flesh."

4 (James 1:21).

"Wherefore lay apart ALL filthiness." No one can chew tobacco and dip snuff, and say, "I have laid apart A-L-L filthiness."

5 (James 1:27).

"Pure religion is . . . to keep himself UN-SPOTTED from the world." No one can use tobacco and truthfully say he is UNSPOTTED FROM THE WORLD.

6 (I Timothy 4:12).

"Be thou an example of the believers." No one can truthfully say that using tobacco is being a "good" example of the believers.

7 (I Thessalonians 5:22).

"Abstain from ALL appearance of evil." No one can use tobacco and do this, for using tobacco is evil.

8 (Galatians 5:24).

"They that are Christ's have crucified the flesh with the affections and lusts." No one can use tobacco and say, "I crucified the flesh with the affections and lusts." The use of tobacco is a "lust of the flesh."

9 (Romans 8:13).

"For if ye live after the flesh, ye shall die: but if ye through the Spirit do mortify the deeds of the body ye shall live." As long as we use tobacco we cannot say we have mortified all the deeds of the body.

10 (Romans 12:2).

"Be not conformed to this world." No one can use tobacco and say that he is not conformed to the world. The use of tobacco is a worldly habit—this is admitted.

11 (Galatians 5:16).

"Walk in the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfill the lust of the flesh." No one can be walking under the full direction of the Spirit of God, who has the light on this subject, and use tobacco, for he is still fulfilling one of the lusts of the flesh.

12 (Titus 2:11, 12).

"For the grace of God that bringeth salvation, hath appeared unto all men, teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and GODLY in this present world." To live GODLY as JESUS CHRIST lived, while here in this present world, you will have to give up the use of tobacco, for Jesus did not use it in any form. He would not use it if He were here today (Hebrews 13:8).

13 (I John 4:17).

"As he is, so are we in this world." We can never be just as Jesus was, and use tobacco, for He never poisoned His pure, clean system with nicotine.

14 (Luke 11:2).

"When ye pray, say, Our Father which art in heaven, Hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done as in heaven, so in earth." Jesus was here teaching His disciples to pray that His will be done here in earth, as it is up in heaven. No one can fully obey this injunction, in his heart and life and use tobacco, for certainly none of the saints use tobacco in heaven. To pray this prayer effectively we will have to lay down the tobacco habit.

15 (II Corinthians 5:17, 18).

"Therefore, if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, ALL things ARE become NEW. And ALL things are OF GOD." No one can use tobacco and truthfully say that A-L-L things are become new, and that ALL things in his life are OF GOD. The tobacco habit is NOT of God!

16 (II Corinthians 6:17).

"Touch not the unclean thing." No one can obey this text and use tobacco, for the use of tobacco is an admittedly "unclean habit." You cannot use it and not touch it. ●●

The Sin of Silence

WE OWE much to the men who founded our nation, men who were not afraid to speak for God and right.

We should not forget that those men who signed the Declaration of Independence were by that act endangering their property and even their lives. When Charles Carroll affixed his signature to the document, someone asked, "How will anyone know which Charles Carroll is meant among all those called by that name in Maryland and elsewhere?"

"Well, let there be no mistake," said the courageous patriot, and he signed in bold letters, "Charles Carroll of Carrollton."

In his book *Profiles in Courage*, John F. Kennedy tells the story of a little-known Senator named Edmund G. Ross. Andrew Johnson had been impeached. Those in favor of his conviction were assured of 35 votes, and they needed only a "guilty" from Mr. Ross to get the verdict. With the Senate chambers packed to the galleries, the question came: "Mr. Senator Ross, how say you?"

Ross had no personal love for Andrew Johnson. He was not a member of the President's party. But he was a man of conscience. A deathlike silence blanketed the chambers as everyone waited for the Senator's reply. Finally Ross rose deliberately and said in a calm, firm voice, "Not guilty."

The die was cast. Andrew Johnson was saved. Later Ross said, "I almost literally looked down into my open grave. Friendships, position, fortune, everything that makes life desirable to an ambitious man were about to be swept away by the breath of my mouth, perhaps forever." But, regardless of the cost, he stood for what he believed.

Christianity grew because its adherents were not silent. They said, "We cannot but speak the things we have seen and heard." Nor did they stop with expressing the great faith they believed in. They stormed against the evils of their day; they were not afflicted with moral laryngitis.

There are no great voices today like those of Jeremiah, Ezekiel, Daniel or Micah, who fearlessly assailed national evils. Nor voices like that of Nathan, who condemned a King's wrongdoing to his face; or John the Baptist, who denounced the immorality and corruption of the royal court, though he knew it might cost him his life. But what kind of voice are we?

Jesus was not silent when He said, "Woe to you, Scribes, Pharisees, hypocrites, for you wash clean the outside of the cup and dish, while within they

are full of greed and self-indulgence" (Matt. 23: 25, Weymouth).

Are we as individuals displaying moral courage equal to the crying needs of home and neighborhood, where our influence counts most? Hardly a day passes without opportunity to stand up and be counted on some issue of importance.

The spiritual strength of a nation is nothing more than the sum of the spiritual strength of its individual citizens.

We must be true to our highest convictions. Never compromise with evil, but give it a positive "no." A good way to learn how to say "no" to the major temptations of life is to practice saying "no" to the minor ones. Small exercises in self-discipline may seem trivial, but they are not. As we employ them successfully we begin to see that we can use the same weapon—the word "no"—to win large battles as well as small.

The world is watching us. It hears our words; it sees our actions. We profess the highest standard in the world—are we living up to that standard? If we cannot pray over a thing and ask God to bless us in it, we should not do it.

One of Christ's great commands to His followers was, "Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your father which is in heaven." It must be obvious to those around us whose side we are on. Attempted neutrality can invite the very evils it seeks to avoid. If we withhold the light, we are extinguishing the light.

He who has never known the bracing thrill of taking a stand for right and sticking to it has missed one of the noblest experiences of life. Moral courage has rewards that timidity can never give.

Courage is contagious. When a good and brave man takes a stand for right, the spines of others often are stiffened.

Moral courage is a virtue of higher cast and nobler origin than physical courage. It springs from a consciousness of virtue and renders one superior to opposition in the defense of right.

Jesus said, "He that is not with me is against me; and he that gathereth not with me scattereth abroad." Whether we realize it or not, we are constantly living epistles, known and read of all men. Let us by word and deed speak forth the words of truth and righteousness which are mighty to save—first to ourselves, and then to those who will hear us. ●●



BEE KIND

BEE KIND is a bee that every child should listen to and obey.

JAMES AND Richard lived near each other, and they were playmates. One day they were playing in a vacant lot, when they saw a dirty little puppy. Richard began to stamp his feet and try to scare it; but as he could not chase it away, he threw stones at the poor little creature.

A stone struck the puppy on his head, and hurt him very badly; for he began to turn round and round, whining and howling pitifully. Richard snickered, as if he thought it a great joke.

"Shame on you!" cried James, "for treating a poor little puppy like that!"

"You're a sissy," said Richard, "or you wouldn't care."

"You may call me what you please," said James, "but I shall never hurt a poor little dog that can't help himself. Maybe he's lost."

With that, he lifted the little creature in his arms and carried

him home. The puppy's head was bleeding where Richard had struck him with the stone. James washed the blood away and gave the little dog something to eat, talking to him kindly and petting him all the while.

When his father came home that evening, he told James that the puppy showed marks of being a very good dog; and that if the owner never came, he might keep him for his own.

James was delighted. He named the dog Rex, and at once began to teach him to do all sorts of tricks. Rex learned to walk on his hind feet, sit up straight and beg for something to eat, play "dead dog," roll over and over, chase his tail, and run through a hoop.

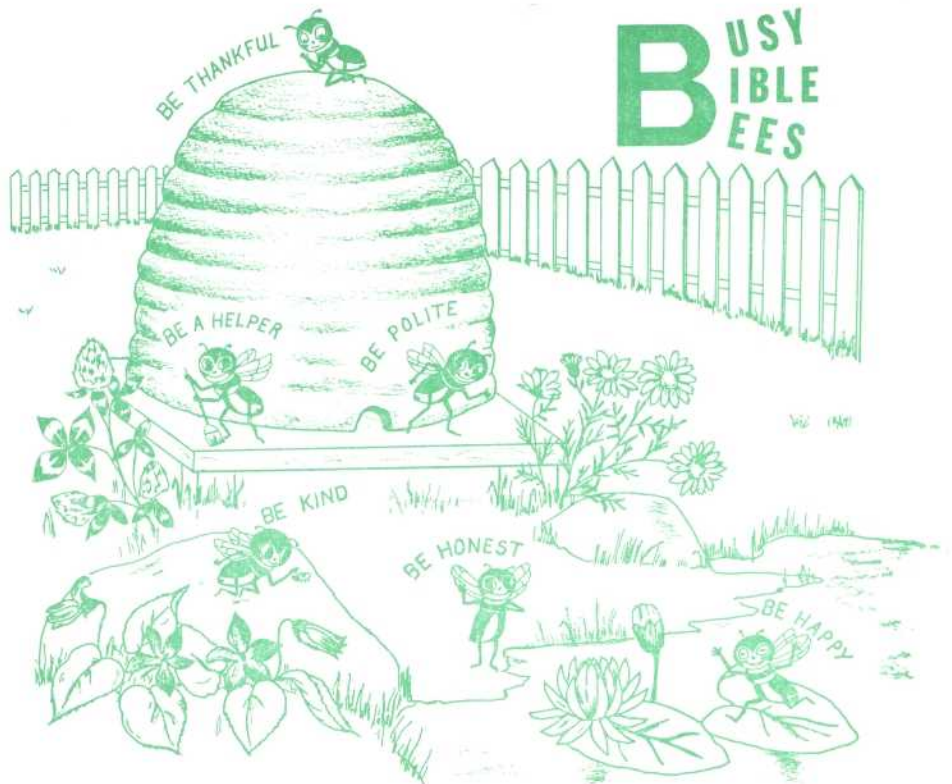
In a few months, Rex had grown to be quite a large dog. By this time, James had taught him to swim; and when the boy would throw a stick into the water and say, "Go get it, Rex," the dog would proudly swim

back with it in his mouth.

All the boys in the neighborhood liked Rex; and he liked them all—except Richard. Whenever he came around, the dog would growl and show his teeth.

Two years later, one warm Saturday afternoon in April, James called Rex and started for the pond. Oftentimes fishing parties visited this pond, so a number of small boats were tied among the willows fringing the shore. On this particular afternoon, Richard and his little brother Harry had also gone to the pond; and Richard untied one of the boats to take a ride. Of course he had no right to use a boat that did not belong to him; but he thought that no one would ever know.

Just as James came around a clump of willows, he saw the little boat tip over; and Richard and Harry fell in, at the deepest place in the pond. James knew they could not swim; so he began to call for help as loudly as



he could. Rex ran back and forth whining, looking first at James, then at the boys in the water. Suddenly a happy thought struck James. Pointing to the two boys, he said, "Go get them, Rex!" Immediately the dog jumped into the water and began to swim toward the boys. He soon had Harry's collar between his teeth, and was swimming back to shore.

James helped Harry to his feet; and then, pointing to Richard, he said, "Go get the other one!"

Richard had gone down the second time when Rex reached him; but as he came up to the surface of the water, the dog caught him and began to swim back. It was a hard task, as Richard was heavier than Harry; but at last Rex brought him safely to shore.

All this time James had been calling for help; and now several men came running toward the pond. They began working with Richard, and after some time he came back to consciousness.

"Who got me out of the water?" he asked, as soon as he could speak. "Rex," answered James.

Tears rolled down Richard's face as he said brokenly, "Just think! I almost killed him when he was a little puppy! I know one thing—I'll never do such a thing again."

Everybody petted and praised Rex for what he had done. Richard's father bought a beautiful new collar for him. But although the dog had saved Richard's life, the dog would have nothing to do

with him afterward. He could not forget how cruelly the boy had treated him in his puppyhood.

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Children, kindness is a Christian virtue that each of us must practice every day and it can be shown in so many different ways. Our story was about being kind to animals but we must be kind to people, too.

Do you remember the story of "Bee Polite?" In that story, Daisy and Dan were not polite to an old lady; but more than that, they were unkind also, and they regretted their actions for a long time. Read that story again and you will see how very, very unkind they were.

We must be careful to be kind to our parents, brothers, sisters, older people. Let us remember the little saying,

Kindness is a perfume, the sweetest on life's shelf.
Sprinkle it on others and you get some on yourself.

If we are kind, everyone will be happy to have us around them and we are sure to be happier ourselves, too. Try to think of all the ways in which you can show kindness and then remember "BEE KIND." Memorize Ephesians 4:32; you will find it helpful. "And be ye kind, one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you." ● ●

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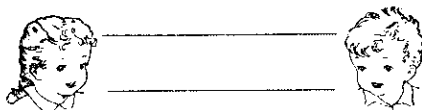
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QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

"I would truly like to know why there are so many poor people in America. Is it that love and mercy have been exchanged for money, and the money has been locked away for a later date?"

It is beyond the power of man to make a just distribution of the wealth of the world so that all can live in plenty. This plan was in effect for a short time following the first Pentecost in the days of the apostles, when the followers of Jesus had all things in common (Acts, chapters 4 and 5). But remember, they had the power of the Holy Spirit to assure just administration of the plan.

Many factors contribute to the unsatisfactory conditions that prevail today. Many times the rich become richer at the expense of the poor; much money is worse than wasted on war; inflation makes it progressively harder for the wage-earner to make ends meet. But such will not always be the case. In the new earth after Christ returns, there will be sufficient for all. Says the spokesman for the Lord, Isaiah: "And her merchandise and her hire shall be holiness to the Lord: it shall not be treasured nor laid up; for her merchandise shall be for them that dwell before the Lord, to eat sufficiently, and for durable clothing" (Isa. 23:18). This condition will exist during the Millennial reign of Christ, when every man shall "sit under his vine and under his fig tree; and none shall make them afraid: for the mouth of the Lord of hosts hath spoken it" (Mic. 4:4). Read also Isaiah 65 for further description of that time.

Speaking of the preponderance of poor people, Abraham Lincoln once said: "The Lord must have loved them best, for He made so many more of them." Of course this explanation is too simple to accept. God set the laws of reproduction in motion, and left matters to take their course. But obviously this situation existed in Jesus' time, for He said, "Ye have the poor with you always."

In recent years an ever-expanding amount of money is being spent by federal and state governments to relieve poverty, but like every other good plan, it is shamelessly abused.

"How does Elijah's coming affect those 'unsaved' dead?"

Elijah's coming will not affect the unsaved dead.

"Now is the accepted time, now is the day of salvation" (II Cor. 6:2). Lifetime is working time. Death ends all opportunity for change. "As the tree falleth, there shall it be" (Eccl. 11:3). When the dead come forth in the day of the Resurrection it will be for the purpose of receiving for what they "have done," whether "good or bad." They will be rewarded or punished accordingly (Rev. 22:12; John 5:29; II Cor. 5:10).

"I read recently that a computer has revealed to scientists that a day was missing in the time log of the universe several thousand years ago. Some people believe this explains the day that the sun stood still in the days of Joshua. What do you think?"

To believe that a day is missing in the history of our earth is to believe that the earth suddenly ceased its motion—an assumption that defies both reason and science.

We cannot believe this is what happened in the days of Joshua. When Joshua commanded the sun and the moon to stand still, he need not have referred to the literal sun and the literal moon, nor to the literal heavens. The words sun, moon, and stars are frequently used in figurative language. A person attending the funeral of Daniel Webster would have heard the speaker say, "A star of magnitude and luster has left the horizon and gone down to the realms of death," but no one would have gazed to the heavens, or thought the speaker referred to a literal star.

The Bible is filled with figurative and symbolic illustrations. For example, the words of Deborah when she was rejoicing over Israel's victory: "The stars in their courses fought against Sisera" (Judges 5:20). No one would assume that the stars of heaven descended to battle with Israel's wicked oppressor. Nor do we think of a literal star when we read, "There shall come a Star out of Jacob, and a Sceptre shall rise out of Israel" (Num. 24:17). The "star" is a figure of Christ, the bright and "morning star" (Rev. 22:16), who will arise to dispel the darkness of evil.

Joseph R. Sizoo, in his exposition of the book of Joshua (*The Interpreter's Bible*) comments as follows about the sun standing still at Joshua's command: "To suppose therefore that the earth stood still is as fantastic as it is impossible. Those who interpret literally must explain what happened to the lost twenty-four hours. Obviously this is to read into the story what was not intended. The Oriental used poetic imagery. It was as if Joshua prayed, 'O Lord, give me time enough to finish my task

(Continued on page 25)

LETTERS

Turn Defeat Into Victory

Time and tide wait for no man, and how happy we should be that we have been given the opportunity of living in the cool of the day of salvation. God is still calling and we can turn defeat into victory if we will only put our trust in Him.

We should be very thankful for this time allotted to us, when trials and tests are much easier than they were in other ages. Soon the wicked shall be cut down as the grass, but they that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength.

If you bear the cross for Jesus
It will make your burden light,
And your path will beam with sunshine
As the noonday clear and bright.
If you follow where He leads you,
Trusting Him by night and day,
You will find your cares grow lighter
As you walk the narrow way.

Milton, Iowa

Mrs. E. T.

Let Your Gift Cost

If we give to God that which costs us nothing and which we never miss when it is gone, or our time when we have nothing else to do, or our possessions when we are gone, our gifts will want much of being precious in His sight.

It's the cost that makes the gift or service most acceptable to God. It will take all the willpower we have to keep passion, appetite, desire and disposition in subjection to His law, but this is the cost that counts.

St. Catharines, Ontario, Canada

A. I. S.

Appreciative

An acquaintance of mine gave me your address, and a brief look at one of your magazines. It seems you have a remarkable understanding of not-so-generally-well-understood Bible truths.

Central City, Kentucky

G. G.

Your help in hearing God's Word is greatly appreciated and treasured. Thank you for spreading the gospel of Jesus Christ.

San Francisco, California

R. W.

A Mighty Power

The truth of God's Word is a mighty power to keep us and make us strong to resist temptation. The more we live according to this truth, the brighter our path will glow.

God has offered such a wonderful reward at the end of the race if we do not turn in the byways of the world and get entangled with evil.

Rome, Georgia

S. J.

June, 1971

Questions and Answers

(Continued from page 24)

and make the victory complete.' He saw the battle going in his favor. He wanted complete victory so that the scattered foe could not under cover of darkness withdraw and re-form his lines. The prayer was answered. Joshua was given time and the victory was made complete."

The Bible itself reveals what happened. Read Joshua 10:12, "Then spake Joshua to the Lord in the day when the Lord delivered up the Amorites before the children of Israel, and he said in the sight of Israel, Sun, stand thou still upon Gibeon; and thou, Moon, in the valley of Ajalon." Notice that Joshua did not command the *sun in the heavens* to stand still, but the sun of Gibeon; neither did he address the *moon in the sky* but the moon in the "valley of Ajalon."

You will notice that the margin of your Bible reads "Be silent" instead of "stand still." Other definitions from the Hebrew are, "To hear someone without speaking, . . . to be silent for Jehovah; i. e., patiently and with confidence to expect his aid; . . . to be quiet, to cease, to leave off." Joshua simply commanded the men of Gibeon and Ajalon, who had appealed to him for help, to be silent and patiently wait with confidence to be delivered—to see the salvation of God. God had promised Joshua that He would deliver the enemy into his hand, and that not a man of them should stand before them. The Gibeonites were commanded by Joshua *not to fight*, but silently wait and behold the power of Israel's God. Gibeon was a great city, the greatest light in the political heavens of that section. It might well have been referred to as the "sun."

Another reason why Joshua may have addressed those cities as sun and moon might be because the people were sun and moon worshipers (II Kings 23:5—11). It was the general custom of the pagan nations to worship the sun, moon and stars.

As for the claim that the computer could detect a flaw in the rhythm of the flow of the days some 2700 years ago—that sounds fantastic! I cannot assume much knowledge of computers, but this claim certainly sounds unfounded. ● ●

*Figure it out for yourself my lad,
You've all that the greatest of men have had,
Two arms, two hands, two legs, two eyes,
And a brain to use if you would be wise;
With this equipment they all began,
So start for the top, and say—"I can."*

Meditations On the Word

(Continued from page 27)

They were in despair and at this time the words they uttered sounded good outwardly. They even promised that they would walk in the way he would show them and do what he commanded. However, later when Jeremiah revealed to them the word of God he also told them of their deceit, for they dissembled in their hearts (they hid their true motives) when they asked Jeremiah to pray for them, with the assertion that they would obey God. This incident revealed their wickedness, for they already had their hearts set to carry out their own plans and would not hearken to the word of God. Their punishment followed as was foretold. The lesson for us in this incident is obvious: We cannot call upon God for deliverance and salvation and at the same time proceed with our own plans, to do what seems right to us.

The world is in a serious condition today, and some men realize fully that we are living in perilous times. One of America's outstanding editors and publishers remarked a short time ago: "There is no foreseeable end to this road down which we are headed. There are no smoothly paved detours by which we may dodge our ultimate destruction." God has the answers to man's perplexing problems, but man disregards with contempt the warning voice of God's spokesmen who utter the only solution. It is true that many of the more serious-minded people resort to prayer and ask that all mankind be guided along the road to universal peace. But the Lord did not say He would be found of them unless they would seek Him with *all* their hearts. Prayer, unless accompanied by works and faith, avails little.

Once again we would stress the greatness of God's mercy. A man's sins may be great, yet while the day of probation lasts it is possible for him to amend his ways, if he takes advantage of every opportunity and shows his sincerity by a life of good fruits. Listen to the words from Isaiah: "Though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool." This is on condition that we wash and become clean; that we cease to do evil, and learn to do well. This glorious transformation can be made only if we are willing and obedient, and if we become clean we shall eat the good of the land. But if we continue in our sinfulness and refuse to hearken, He will destroy us in the end.

God's manner of dealing with His people is based

on the soundest of justice. It is expressed by the prophet Ezekiel so clearly that further comment is unnecessary: "When the righteous turneth from his righteousness, and committeth iniquity, he shall even die thereby. But if the wicked turn from his wickedness, and do that which is lawful and right, he shall live thereby" (33:18, 19).

Many professing followers of God have been found in a condition which He greatly dislikes. That is the "lukewarm" attitude—being half-hearted in serving God and yet not content with the offers of the world. This is a sad state in which to live, for such individuals neither enjoy this life fully, nor will they that which is to come, for it will not be theirs to enjoy beyond the Millennium. God's warning to this class is, "repent and do the first works."

The conclusion of the whole matter is that we can still repent and turn from any sin we have committed. God will hear and save us if we serve Him "with all our heart." But if we continue in sin and do not bring fruits "answerable to amendment of life," though we may cry at the last He will not hear. • •

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Meditations

On the Word

IT WAS at the time when the children of Israel stood at the border of the Promised Land and Moses their great lawgiver was reminding them of the great things God had done for them and exhorting them to give Him their full allegiance, that these comforting words were uttered. From the time the sons of Jacob and their families moved to Egypt and all during their cruel bondage, their miraculous deliverance, their wanderings in the Wilderness, to the day they stood ready to enter Canaan, they had experienced many hardships, but also had witnessed much of the power and workings of God among them. They had not always been faithful and obedient; the great majority of them were a hardhearted and rebellious people, and for this cause many of them had perished in the Wilderness. But those who did cleave to the Lord their God were spared alive and were ready to inherit the blessing.

The Lord knew from the beginning what should be the end of this people as a nation. Thus Moses was inspired to relate to them the misfortunes that should befall them when they forsook the true God and worshiped the gods of the surrounding nations. The two most severe judgments upon them were the 70 years of captivity in Babylon, and the destruction of Jerusalem by the Romans (A. D. 70). More than a million Jews perished at this latter calamity and many others were enslaved. This was but a fulfillment of God's word, of what should be their end if they forsook Him.

Although, because of disobedience, God had cast off the Jews from being a nation and had directed His efforts toward calling the Gentiles to His service, yet if they should call upon Him and seek Him with their whole heart, they would

find Him. As the verses following our text clearly show, even "in the *latter days*"—this present day—anyone—Jew or Gentile—who will turn and be obedient, will receive His mercy.

Inasmuch as "the things written aforetime were written for our learning" (Rom. 15:4), these words of Moses are as much an injunction to us as to the Jews. He has given us His Word whereby we may be saved if we observe it with our whole heart. However, through the centuries man has formulated creeds and rituals to suit his own likings, and today the precepts of God given through His Word are disregarded. As the Israelites turned to worship the gods of their neighboring nations, so today the world worships gods of their own making: pleasures, money, power.

But even in this condition and in these latter days if we turn to Him and seek Him according to His will, we shall find Him.

In every instance when the Lord commanded men to serve Him, the command was qualified with the words, "with all thy heart and with all thy soul." Anything short of this is a divided allegiance, and as our Lord said, "No man can serve two masters." When the service is divided, God will not accept it. When the lips utter words and prayers of apparent sincerity and the actions run counter, it is hypocrisy. Even the "tithe of mint and anise and cummin" is not acceptable to God when the weightier matters of the law, "judgment, mercy, and faith" are omitted. God can be found, but not by men of divided hearts, aims and purposes.

In Jeremiah 42 we are given an account of a remnant of Israelites who made an appeal to the prophet Jeremiah that he should pray to God for them.

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"But if from thence thou shalt seek the Lord thy God, thou shalt find him, if thou seek him with all thy heart and with all thy soul"
(Deut. 4:29).

Stir Me!

*Stir me, O stir me, Lord!
I care not how,
But stir my heart in passion for Thy Word.
Stir me to give, to go, but most
To work—
Work till my smallest sin is sacrificed;
Work till Thy peace and holiness
Pervade the deepest recess
Of my heart.*

*Stir me, O stir me, Lord!
Till all my being
Is filled with deepest yearnings
For Thy light.
Till Thy compelling "must" drive me to share,
Till Thy constraining love bring me in prayer,
O God, to Thee, help me believe.
Far-reaching be Thy holy flame that I
In burning deep desire
May blaze with faith's great quenchless fire!*

*Stir me, O stir me, Lord!
Thy heart was stirred
By love's intensest fire, till Thou
Didst give
Thine only Son, Thy most-beloved One,
To teach us how to die, that we might live!
Stir me to give myself again to Thee
That Thou mayest give Thyself again through me.*

*Stir me, O stir me, Lord!
For I can see
Thy glorious triumph-day begin to break;
The dawn already gilds the eastern sky!
O Church of Christ, awake!
Awake!
O stir us, Lord, as heralds of that Day!
The night is past,
Our King is on His way!*