



Megiddo Message

O the bliss of the one who relies on the Lord,
who rests his confidence in him...

He shall be like a tree planted along the river,
its roots reaching deep into the water;
untouched by any fear of heat.

—Jeremiah 17:7-8

Vol. 75, No. 6

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Don't Judge Too Quickly!

FLASH judgments come so easily. The moment we see someone, we instinctively begin to form an opinion of him—what he *appears* to be versus what he *ought* to be. The habit is universal; worse, it is reciprocal. The teacher judges the student, and the student the teacher. The employer judges his employee, and the employee his employer. Judgment is everywhere, between men and women, between children and parents, between rivals and friends, between nations and leaders of nations.

These judgments so impulsively drop into our conversation, where criticism and blame are expressed harshly or ironically, with outspokenness or with subtlety. (We assume, of course, that *our* judgment is the best and that others should meet our standard.) Add to this spoken criticism our secret, unspoken judgments which can corrode deep into the heart in which they are harbored, and we have a power strong enough to break any friendship and alienate us completely from the love of God.

This is not to say that all judging is needless criticism, or that all judging is wrong. Jesus did say, "Judge not, that ye be not judged"; but He went on to explain that we should not condemn another without first recognizing our own transgression. He summarized His thought with a clear command to judge: "Wherefore by their fruits ye shall know them." Jesus never wanted us to call bad apples good; neither would He condone sharp criticisms of good fruit. We should learn to distinguish, so that we may emulate the good and shun the evil.

But so often our judgments are of something superficial and not in the least important. Yet our judgment—even of the harmless—can cause harm if it is not governed by the principles of honesty, long-suf-

fering and meekness in ourselves. Again, what we are judging in another may be something that does not affect us at all, and that does not have any relation to that person's eternal welfare; yet, when we make an observation, there we are with our little black book of judgment, ready to deliver the latest sentence.

What we forget is that usually we do not know the whole story. We cannot see the whole picture, nor do we know all the facts. We cannot know the secret thoughts and hopes of others; we have little idea of their struggles, their sufferings, their motivations. And still we judge.

Why do we do it? Who has appointed us to be judge of our brother? Doesn't our eagerness to judge others show that we think our opinions to be quite superior? Is there not possibly in our own heart a secret desire to show ourselves a bit above another? To criticize is to imply that we are better able to manage than the one criticized. What we forget is that the person we are criticizing in all probability tends to feel the same way. And if the law of God is not strictly governing, the result is a clash of personalities, and two stumble into transgression.

Perhaps the most serious effect of hasty judgments is that they call forth more of the same. One ungoverned trait incites another until we fall deeper and deeper into sin, as we counter one misjudgment with another and then seek to cover them over with a feigned show of sincerity.

Next time we feel like criticizing another quickly, why not thank God first for our own deliverance, and pray for that "meek and quiet spirit" that can make full allowance for what we do not know and that can judge others as we ourselves wish to be judged of God.

MM

Megiddo means . . .

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

We believe

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

We believe

—in the Bible as our only source of knowledge about God and His purposes and plans for the salvation of humankind.

We believe

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

We believe

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

We believe

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

We believe

—in ourselves as capable of applying the precepts and principles of the Word of God in our own lives, in this way perfecting that high quality of character which God has promised to reward with life everlasting in His heavenly Kingdom on earth.

We believe

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

Bible Quotations

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

NEB—New English Bible

NIV—New International Version

NASB—New American Standard Bible

RSV—Revised Standard Version

TLB—The Living Bible

TEV—Today's English Version

JB—The Jerusalem Bible, Reader's Edition

Phillips—The New Testament in Modern English

Berkeley—The Modern Language New Testament

Weymouth—The New Testament in Modern Speech

Goodspeed—The New Testament translated by Edgar J. Goodspeed

Moffatt—The Bible, A New Translation

AAT—The Bible: An American Translation

About Our Cover

Our cover photo is a view of the Niagara River from Goat Island, taken by Mr. and Mrs. Sutton.

Megiddo Message

Vol. 75, No. 6

June, 1988

Editorial	
DON'T JUDGE TOO QUICKLY!	2
Articles	
THE BIBLE HAS THE ANSWER	4
Understanding life, death, creation and destiny	
FOUR WORLD EMPIRES	8
The Bible Confirmed	
By the Rise and Fall of Four World Empires	
PERILOUS PRIDE	13
Lines to Live By	14
Story	
BROADER FIELDS—Part II	16
A Story from the Early Life of Jesus	
Letters	21
Article	
AFRAID OF DEMONS?	22
Demons and devils are no part of Christian faith	
Questions and Answers	
Concerning:	
What about "666"?	24
Donation of Vital Organs	25
Article	
PENTECOST	27

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MEGIDDO is a way of believing and living, grounded solidly in the Bible as the reliable Word of our Creator. A total view of life, the world and the universe, it sees all events, men and nations moving together toward one God-ordained climax: the Kingdom of God on earth. This has been the plan of God since the beginning. Christ will return visibly, bodily, as King, and the governments of this world will be joined to form a totally new worldwide government. When the task is complete, our earth shall be numbered among the heavenly, glorified worlds and filled with immortal inhabitants. This is the purpose and goal of all creation.

WHO ARE WE?

WHY ARE WE HERE?

AFTER DEATH WHAT?

THINGS TO COME

WHAT IS THE SOURCE OF LIFE?

WHERE DID WE COME FROM?

THE SURETY OF GOD

THE BIBLE HAS THE Answer

OUR world is filled with questions, questions which we must face every day we live. Here we are, living beings on a planet called Earth. Why are we here? Where did we come from? Where are we going? We are part of a tremendous world of mountains and plains, rivers and oceans. Why?

Our world is teeming with life. There are many, many people—more than four billions of them. And there are animals. Some that fly, others that swim, or walk, or crawl. Altogether we are a huge family. Where did we come from? Did we all just “happen”?

A marvelous world it is, and we are able to enjoy it. We have eyes to see, and our world is filled with color and light and beauty. We have ears to hear, and there are sounds and music, words and language. We are able to think, remember, reason and relate one experience to another. How is this possible?

Our world is full of questions, and men in every part of our world have been trying to answer them for centuries. Some have said that everything just happened to be—but what made the first thing “happen”? Was it mere “chance”?

Some people say there is no plan, no purpose, no future, that this life is all and when you’re dead, you’re dead. This means there is no design behind nature, no intelligent governing power—but have you ever looked up at the heavens on a clear night? If there is no designer, what caused all those bodies of light, the eternal sun, the moon and stars?

Thousands live from day to day without giving any thought to the meaning or purpose of life. They eat and sleep and work and think of nothing else. To them, this life is all. But does that mean there *is* nothing more?

Some people believe a superpower has predetermined the course of all events, and that nothing a person can do can change anything. There is no hope, no ambition, no improvement. The future offers nothing, they say. But can you believe it? Is there no supreme blessing to which we may look forward and toward which we may strive?

Other people believe they can make images with their hands, out of clay or wood or stone, and bow to them and receive some kind of help or guidance. But what reasoning being can believe that! Can something which has no power to see, or hear, or talk, or move give any spiritual blessing to the man who fashioned it?

Some people believe we are here solely for the good that we can do to others. We are here to love and serve one another, to relieve suffering and promote goodwill; that is the supreme good of life. But is it? Is there nothing more?

Still others believe life is an endless round of existence, changing constantly from one form to another. This is called reincarnation, and the whole round is either perpetual or it ends somewhere in the perfection of absolute nothingness. But is there any evidence for such a belief?

What is **THE** answer? Where shall we look? There is only one source of reliable, sure information, and that is **THE BIBLE**.

The Bible is the written Word of God for our instruction and salvation.

One Creator, God

We believe in one supreme, all-powerful, all-knowing God. He is and always was and always will be, and every problem and question of the human mind can find its complete solution in Him. Why? Because He is the Creator and Supreme Ruler of all.

Consider the house in which you live. Did it just happen, or did someone put it together? You have clothing. Did the threads just happen to fall together in order, or did some hand weave them? You walk down a road. Did all the stones just happen to lie in order to make a smooth path, or did someone place them?

Nothing can make itself. Everything that is made is living evidence of a maker. And so, everything in our world—including ourselves—had a Maker, a Creator, a Designer—God.

But God is in heaven. We are on earth. How can we know anything about what He is doing, about His purpose or His plan for us?

The Bible, Our Creator's Message to Us

Through the ages God has used many different means of communicating with men, and He could use many more if He wished. He could sound His voice like thunder and shake the earth so that all would stop and listen, if He wished. Or He could send personal messengers to tell us what He wanted us to know, if He chose to do so.

But right now God is not using

any of these methods to communicate with us. Right now He is using "silent" means of communication, not openly audible but no less clear and understandable. Long ago He planned this and made provision for us, so His people would not be left without help. To meet their need during this time He caused a Book to be written, in which He recorded all we would need to know about Him and His purpose. He preserved that Book, and today it is available in almost all parts of the world. We call it the Bible.

The Bible is not an ordinary book written by ordinary human authors. It is not a book which gives us the imaginations, speculations and philosophies of men. It is not fantasy or fiction. The Bible is the information our Creator wanted us to have, His thoughts written down for our instruction. God Himself supervised the writing of this book, as "Holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Spirit" (II Pet. 1:21). They wrote what they could not or would not have written on their own. This is why the information in the Bible is so priceless to us.

The Bible tells of the dealings of

God with His human family through the ages. It is about people who actually lived. It tells how God revealed Himself and His knowledge to them, and how He worked with them, through them and around them.

Everything about the Bible is real and in harmony with the facts of history and science. It is the real record of men and women who actually lived. It tells of events that actually happened. It was written in and about places that actually existed.

Even more than all this, the Bible involves us because it tells us about our own possibilities for the future. It tells us how *we* can fit into God's great ongoing plan, and how it will affect us. On the pages of the Bible we see the plan of God—a plan not yet complete but which is progressing slowly, steadily toward completion.

The Bible is a book of *facts*. This is all-important, because our future life is a matter of life and death—*eternal* life, or *eternal* death. In something so important as our own future existence we *must* have facts, evidence, certainty.

The Book We Can DEPEND On

How can we know that the Bible is not just another book about philosophy or religion?

How can we be sure that the Bible is a book of facts, and not just another book by human authors? How can we know that its writing was directed by the Almighty Creator of heaven and earth? The Bud-

The Bible is our only source of knowledge about God and His plan available today.

dhist have their sacred scriptures and give glowing testimonies of what their religion does for them. The Hindus have their sacred Vedas, the sacred writings of their holy men. And the Moslems have the writings of Mohammed, and so on and on. How can we know that the Bible is not the same as all these other writings, just the words of some more men who had more ideas? How shall we be sure the Bible is the Word of God? We need evidence.

Now either the Bible is all true, and can be depended on, or it is all false and should be wholly rejected. It is either the Word of God or it is not; there is no neutral position.

We believe:

- The Bible is the written Word of God made available to us through God's instrumentality for our instruction and salvation.
- The Bible is our only source of knowledge about God and His plan available today.

What is the evidence behind these facts?

1) The harmony of its teachings.

The Bible is composed of sixty-six different books, written over a period of 1600 years. The authors of these books were men, human as we are, and they came from all walks of life. Some were kings, some fishermen, some herdsmen, statesmen, doctors. These different men wrote in three different languages, and on three continents. Yet they all proclaim *one* message of salvation—how could this be unless all were moved and guided by the same supreme God?

2) Its miraculous preservation.

The Bible has had the fiercest of enemies. It has been burned and its advocates have been persecuted and tortured, to say nothing of the ridicule it has suffered in the hands of intellectuals. Yet it has survived these thousands of years and is available worldwide today in nearly every

written language on earth.

3) Evidence from fulfilled prophecies.

Within the Bible are hundreds of prophecies which were fulfilled as predicted, and often hundreds of years later. This feature is unique, not being attempted in the Vedas or the Koran or any other "scriptures" of any other religion. No man has power to fore-know the future. This ability belongs to God and God alone, and the quantity of fulfilled prophecy in the Bible attests to the fact that it is the written Word of God.

Just consider the multitude of prophecies about Jesus, the majority of which were spoken hundreds and even thousands of years before His birth. The prophets foretold such specific details as the city in which He would be born, the family lineage—even the *year* of His birth. They foretold the effects of His ministry, the method by which He would be betrayed and the price for which He would be sold, numerous details about His suffering and death, His resurrection, His ascension to heaven, and so on. All these forecasts proved accurate to their finest detail. How was it possible? There is only one answer. The God of heaven was behind it, a God who can know the future with as much certainty as we know the past.

4) The Accuracy of Bible Accounts

The Bible supports all true science and its accounts have proven again

**Christ is coming to set up a new
and universal government upon earth.
This prophecy is repeated in
different words more than 300 times
in the New Testament alone.**

and again to be historically correct. Archaeology has confirmed and continues to confirm details of custom, circumstance and setting incorporated in many of its accounts. This proves that the Bible is accurate, and that it was written by people who lived at that time.

The accuracy of the Bible is also marvelous when we consider the unknown number of times it was copied by ordinary men who could easily have distorted its record. But newly found manuscripts differ hardly at all from those discovered years ago—more evidence that God was at work, preserving His message for men and guarding its accuracy so that those who would need it for the knowledge of God would be able to depend upon it.

5) The Testimony of Bible writers.

The Bible writers themselves testify to the God who was speaking through them. They realized that they were not "on their own," that they were instruments in His hand. Phrases such as "The word of the Lord came," or "Thus saith the Lord," or "The Lord said" or "The Lord spoke" occur literally thousands of times in Scripture. Here is a feature which the writers of any other so-called "sacred scriptures" could not duplicate. And all the words of all its authors combine into one overall teaching and one plan of salvation—a total impossibility were the Bible the work of ordinary writers.

The BIBLE Confirmed

By the Rise and Fall of FOUR WORLD EMPIRES

THE Bible is reliable. We can depend on it. This fact is amply proven by the rise and fall of Four World Empires, predicted in two prophetic visions recorded in the book of Daniel when only the first of these empires was in existence.

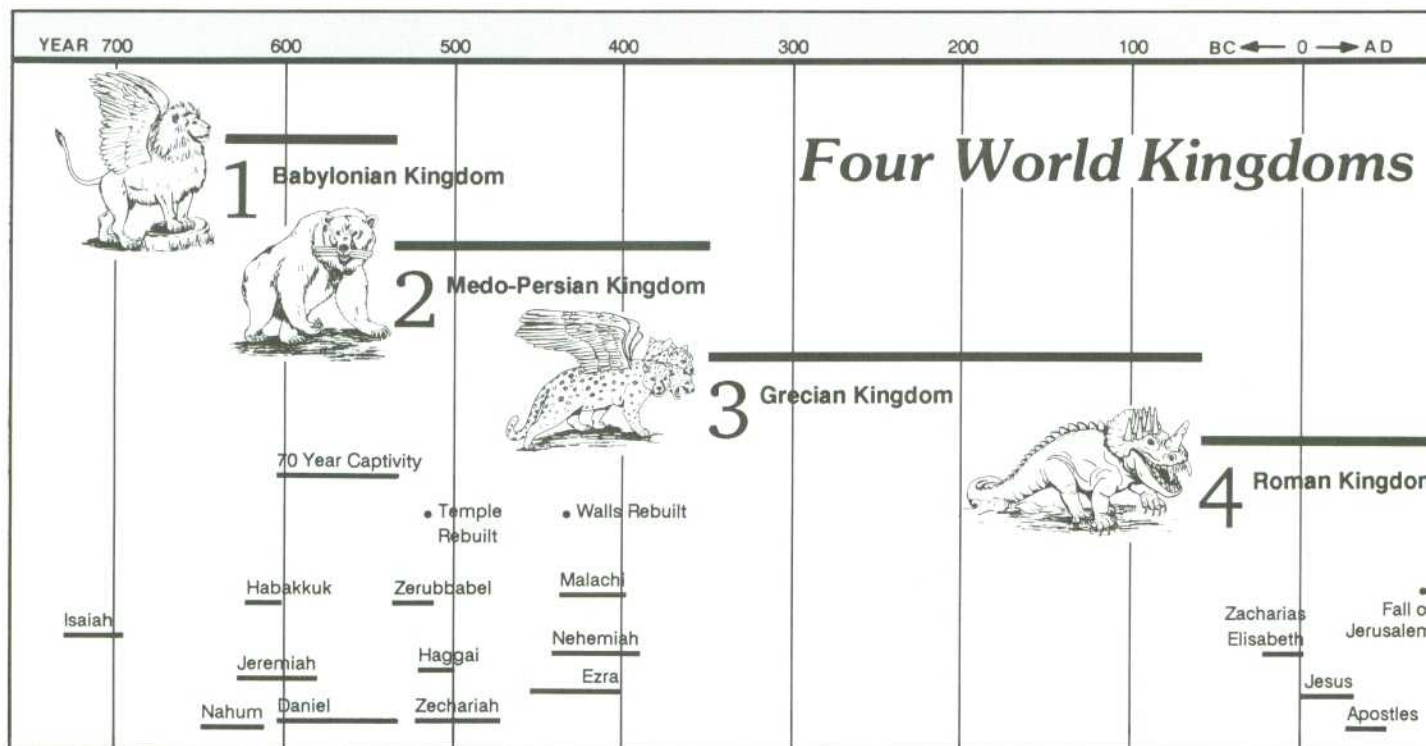
Now all kinds of so-called "prophets" and "wise men" have been telling visions and dreams through the ages. What makes those in the Bible *different*? The difference lies in the *real meaning* and real fulfillment which always accompanied Bible prophecies—because they were revelations from God and not imaginations of men.

The Vision of the Great Image

We read about this remarkable prophecy in the second chapter of the book of Daniel. The Babylonian king Nebuchadnezzar had a God-inspired dream, in which he saw a great image, having a head "of fine gold, his breast and his arms of silver, his belly and his thighs of brass, his legs of iron, his feet part of iron and part of clay" (Dan. 2:32-33).

When the king awoke, he knew that he had had an important dream, but he could not recall it. He called in all his magicians and wise men, and they were helpless to

"In the days of these kings shall the God of heaven"



recall the dream to the king. "Tell us the dream," they said, "and we will interpret it. But do not ask us to tell you what you dreamed!"

But the king was not satisfied. So the prophet Daniel was called to reveal and interpret the unusual dream. The explanation which follows is recorded in Daniel 2 (verses 36-45). "Thou art this head of gold," he told the Babylonian king. But Babylon was not to rule forever.

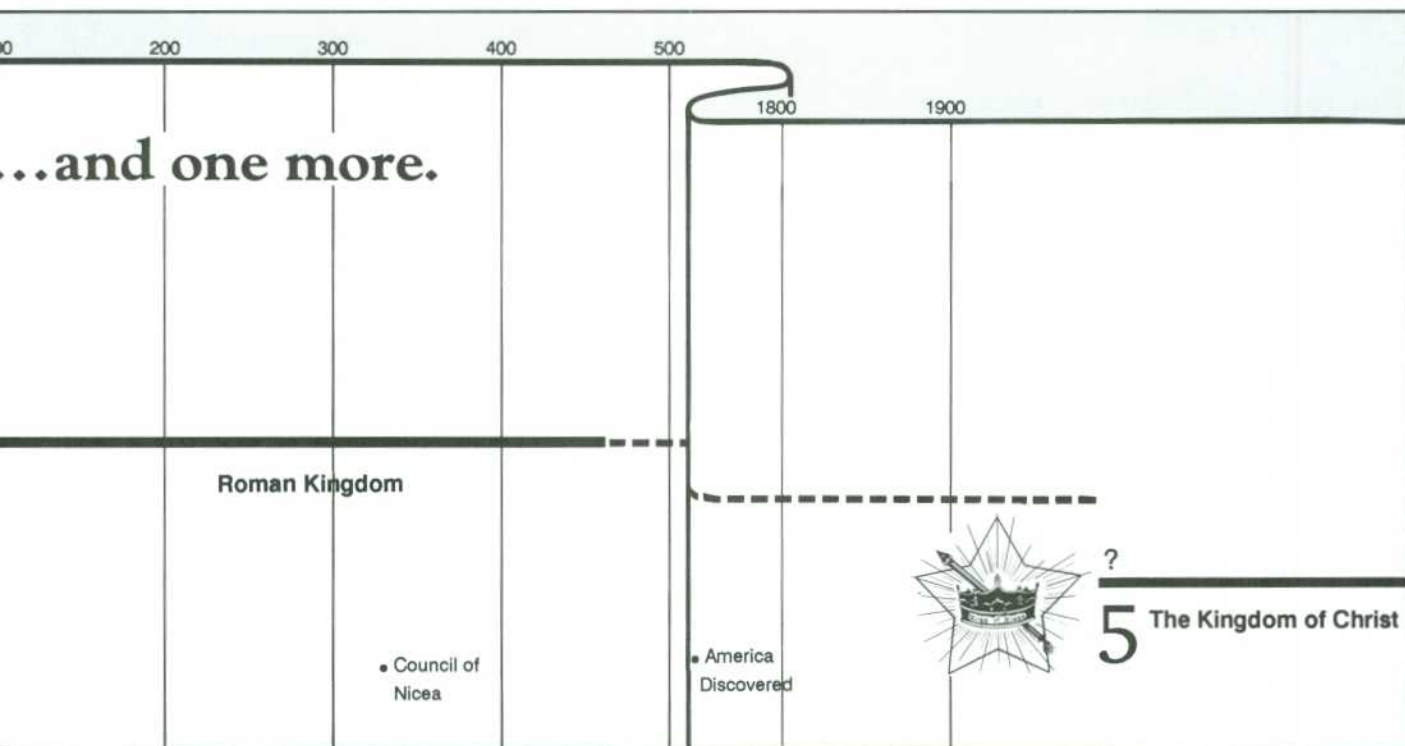
"After thee shall arise another kingdom inferior to thee," the prophecy continues, and it describes what was the kingdom of Medo-Persia. But this kingdom was also to fall in due time, and a third kingdom "of brass," the kingdom of Greece, was to replace it. In due time the kingdom of Greece would also fall before a "fourth" kingdom "strong as iron," the Roman Empire. The prophecy goes even further by describing the dividing of the Empire into East and West, represented by the two iron legs of the image. Then, much later, its broken and divided remnants are represented by the feet and toes of the image, "part of iron and part of clay."

History confirms that these kingdoms *did* rise and fall, just as the Prophet said they would, and the Prophet spoke these words when only the *first* of these world

kingdoms was in existence. What better evidence could we find of the verity of Bible prophecies! Can we not trust the word of a God who can foretell the future of nations with such accuracy? Here is the whole purpose of the Bible's predictions—to give us faith in God, faith in His Word, faith in His plan. The Bible itself presents this challenge to us: "How shall we know the word which the Lord hath not spoken?" it asks. And the answer: "When a prophet speaketh in the name of the Lord, if the thing follow not, nor come to pass, that is the thing which the Lord hath not spoken" (Deut. 18:21-22).

But there is more in the prophecy in Daniel than we have mentioned. The Prophet went on to tell of a *fifth* world kingdom, represented in the vision as a "stone ...cut out of the mountain without hands," which struck the image on the feet and "brake in pieces the iron, the brass, the clay, the silver, and the gold," all the kingdoms of men, and "became a great mountain, and filled the whole earth." What is this fifth kingdom? The Prophet tells us plainly: "In the days of these kings [when their days are completed] shall the God of heaven set up a kingdom, which shall never be destroyed:...and it shall stand forever" (Dan. 2:44).

set up a Kingdom which shall never be destroyed."



The Vision of the Four Beasts

The book of Daniel records a parallel prophecy of this same significant history using another set of symbols: four different beasts, each amazingly descriptive of the singular likeness of these four world kingdoms. This prophecy is contained in another God-inspired dream, this one given

BABYLONIAN KINGDOM—
*represented by a Lion
with eagle's
wings.*



to the prophet Daniel himself. Read the account of the vision, recorded in Daniel 7. In this vision the four world empires are represented by four beasts, and the description of each individual beast is amazingly parallel to the singular features of that empire.

Many years ago our founder, Rev. L. T. Nichols, engaged with a noted infidel in debate. The infidel questioned him. "How do you know, Mr. Nichols, that you can depend on the Bible? How can you place your confidence in such a book as being God-inspired? Where is the original? And how is it that He placed so little value on it that He did not preserve it, but that it comes to us as a counterfeit so full of mistakes, absurdities, inconsistencies, and contradictions that the wonder grows how any intelligent man can be imposed upon by it? Christians and others in their study of the Bible history ought to observe more closely how flimsy a foundation they have to build upon. And if the foundation is on the shifting sand of conjecture, can the superstructure be pronounced firm and safe? How can any logician start from the premises of supposition and arrive at an absolute cer-

tain conclusion? But that is just what the Christian world does with reference to the Bible."

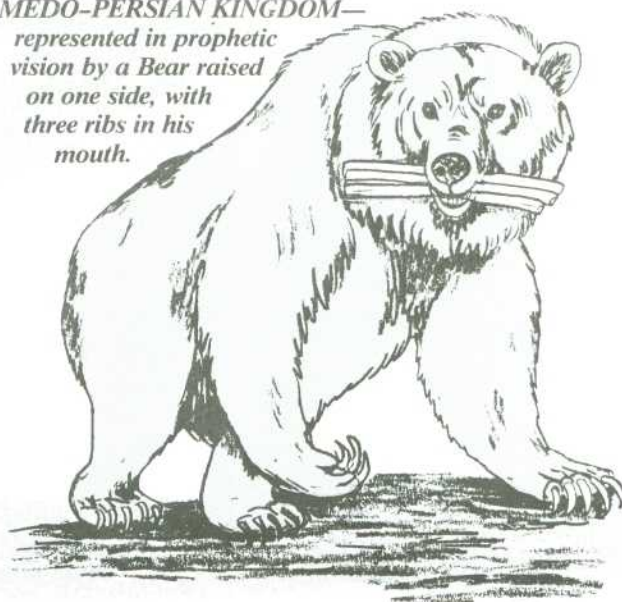
Such a criticism is at best ill-informed, for no book from ancient times has so much evidence to support its authenticity as the Bible. No other book from antiquity has so many copies so nearly identical, so free from absurdities, inconsistencies, and contradictions when properly understood.

Our founder used the seventh chapter of Daniel to point out an important fact to the infidel. "Why do I believe the Bible to be Divine?" he said. "Why have I my confidence in it?

"Suppose that you and I had never traveled from here to a certain distant city, and we were inquiring the way, and someone told us, 'There is a way I can direct you that will be impossible for you to make a mistake, if you follow my directions.' We agree to this and start out with his directions, which are these:

"Travel along in that direction until you come to a corner where you find erected a lion with eagle's wings. Turn to the right and travel in that direction until you come to a bear with three ribs in his mouth, and turn left; travel along until you come to a leopard with four heads and four wings, and turn to the right. Travel in that direction until you come to a great and dreadful and terrible beast, with seven heads and ten horns, and turn left again. Travel in that direction until you come to the same

MEDO-PERSIAN KINGDOM—
*represented in prophetic
vision by a Bear raised
on one side, with
three ribs in his
mouth.*



beast with a little horn arising. After you see this little horn pluck up the other horns, travel along that way 1260 miles, and then you may begin to look for the city you seek.'

Four world kingdoms, foretold in the Bible and confirmed in history—here is evidence for the Bible that the world cannot overthrow.

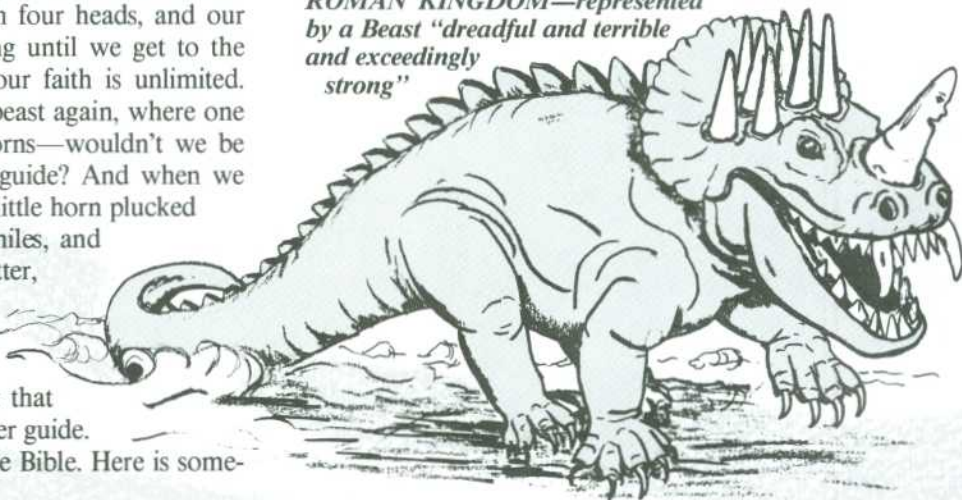
"Now I would like to know when we travel over the road and come to the lion with eagle's wings, if our confidence would not be increased in that man's story. It certainly would. We travel along until we come to the next landmark, the bear with three ribs in his mouth, and our faith is increased the more. Travel along a little further until we come to the leopard with four heads, and our faith is still increased. Travel along until we get to the great and dreadful monster, and our faith is unlimited. And when we come to this same beast again, where one horn has plucked up the other horns—wouldn't we be foolish at this point to doubt our guide? And when we measure off from the time that the little horn plucked up three, and travel along 1260 miles, and see all come to pass to the very letter, then we know that we may begin to look for the city. I would like to know if any man in the universe could make us believe at that point that that man was not a proper guide.

"That is just what we have in the Bible. Here is some-

thing that all the world cannot overthrow, and it gives me faith and confidence in this Book.

"Now this is just what we have in the book of Daniel, in the seventh chapter. Here are those four beasts, representing four world kingdoms.

ROMAN KINGDOM—represented by a Beast "dreadful and terrible and exceedingly strong"



GRECIAN KINGDOM—represented by a leopard with four heads and four wings



"We are all acquainted with the history of the rise and fall of these four world kingdoms. The first was Babylon, represented in Nebuchadnezzar's dream as the head of gold; represented in the dream of the beast as the first beast, as a lion with eagle's wings. The second empire, represented in the dream of the image as the breast and arms of silver, was the Medo-Persian kingdom. "And after thee shall arise a third kingdom of brass which shall rule over the earth." This represented the kingdom of Greece. In the dream of the beasts it was compared to a leopard with four heads and four wings. This is especially fitting, because a leopard is a very swift-moving animal, as was Alexander the Great in his record-breaking conquest. But when he was only 32 years old, he died, and his kingdom was divided among his four generals, fittingly described in the dream by the "four heads."

The fourth kingdom was that of Rome, the great

Roman Empire being the strongest empire of the four, "dreadful and terrible and strong exceedingly."

We find in the days of Christ that this fourth kingdom of Rome existed in its consolidated form. It was not until the fourth century that it had two legs as in the image, eastern and western Rome. And today we see the feet of the body, part of iron and part of clay; partly strong and partly weak; broken remnants throughout western Europe.

Why We Believe

Why do we believe the Bible Divine, when it predicts in advance the details of four world kingdoms, which are now recorded as confirmed history?

Do you suppose any man on the face of the earth could have predicted such unless by Divine guidance?

Our founder continues: "Say to me that any man could have been the author of that—say to me that the Bible is wholly human? It cannot be! Impossible! Utterly impossible!"

The Fifth Empire

Now what about a fifth empire? Is there any possibility? Not according to the prophecy in the vision of the image; not according to the prophecy in the vision of the four beasts. There were to be four, and only four. The fifth kingdom was to be something different—the eternal kingdom of Christ.

What does this mean?

To quote from our founder again: "Look at Napoleon Bonaparte, and the little German Garibaldi. Take the late Napoleon. He understood the tactics of war better than anyone else in the world of his time, and had the best drilled soldiers. He started out the head of France and attempted to conquer Prussia. Having conquered Prussia, he intended then to conquer Russia. Having conquered those two powers he could have conquered the world and established a universal worldwide empire, and his son Louis would have been its emperor.

"Why did these great men all fail to establish a world empire? It was because the Bible is Divine, and predicts that the next or fifth world kingdom is to be none other than the kingdom of God.

"The Bible tells us (citing the vision of the image, Daniel 2) that 'in the days of these kings'—at the completion of their time—*'shall the God of heaven set up a*

kingdom.' No question about it, no other possibilities. Here is the kingdom represented by the little stone, which smote the image on the feet—not on the head, not on the arm, not on the thigh, but on the feet, down at the end of all these kingdoms—and became a great mountain and filled the whole earth."

We believe these things, because there is no power upon earth that can show that men could have predicted them and foretold such great and wonderful events as these four world kingdoms of men, except by Divine knowledge.

Mr. Nichols continues: "Never say to me that there is nothing in the Bible to show that it is of Divine origin. Take this Bible and study these testimonies for yourselves, and make up your mind from them and you will never be an infidel or a free-thinker. Never."

How Prophecy Affects Us

Now all this prophecy affects *us*, and affects us profoundly. We find ourselves living today right at the end of the kingdoms of men. The little stone has not yet struck the image on the feet, but it soon will. And it will grow, and grow, until it fills the whole earth.

Just as surely as the four previous kingdoms rose and fell as predicted, so we can have confidence that this fifth kingdom, the kingdom of Christ, will some day be established upon earth, just as the Bible predicts.

Christ is coming to set up a new and universal government upon earth. This prophecy is repeated in different words more than 300 times in the New Testament alone. The Bible is filled with prophecies of the blessings and prosperity that will come with that new government. There will be universal prosperity, universal peace, no more sickness, pain, poverty, war, bloodshed, suffering, crime or injury. There will be one worldwide, stable government for the good of all.

This is the hope of the Bible. This is *our* hope. It is no dream or vision of the night; it is sure, it is certain, it is true. These things shall be!

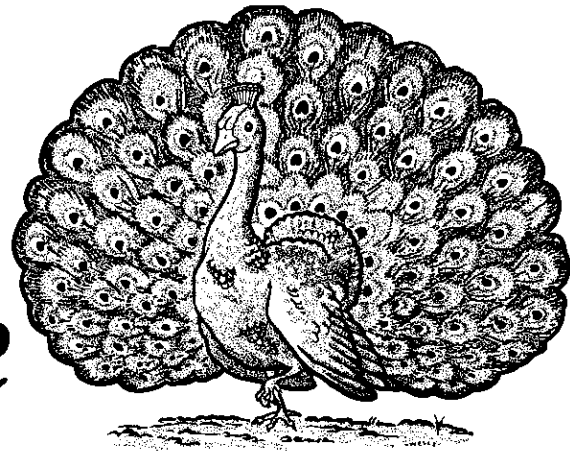
Let us show by our lives each and every day that we really believe it. Let us conduct ourselves as citizens of that fifth, great kingdom. Let us *be* now what we will *want to be then*, for soon, very soon—whether we believe it or not, whether we are ready or not—these things shall be!

MM

"Take this Bible and study it for yourself and you will never be an infidel or a free-thinker. Never."—L. T. Nichols



Perilous Pride



PROBABLY no sin is more common than pride. It is part of our very being. None of us are exempt. An instinct toward pride, a desire to please, to be appreciated, to be commended and praised, is part of every-one of us.

And it is not all bad. A certain sense of pride is good and necessary to existence; much more to the attaining of future life. The man or woman who seeks no glory in life has no desire for *more* life and no appreciation of higher good, consequently is of no value to God. A sense of worthfulness and a desire to better and improve oneself is a vital step toward serving and pleasing God.

However, unless severely controlled, our natural instinct to pride goes far beyond being a means to an end and becomes instead an end in itself. Instead of using our desire for approval to secure the approval of God, we take pride in satisfying our own low ambitions. We take pride in ourselves, what we are, what we do, and how we do it.

Pride, to be beneficial, must be redirected, controlled, disciplined. This means work.

For centuries pride has been cataloged as one of the "seven deadly sins."

In one of its most common, too-human forms, it is a desire to conceal our faults from one another, to sell ourselves to one another at the high-

est price they will accept us for.

The only way to do this is to conceal. To be fully known is to be known for what we are, and this is ruinous to our pride. To use various familiar similes, we are clay vessels in the hands of the potter; rough stones under the hard blows of the hammer and chisel; wild colts in the process of being tamed—not much to be proud of!

Yet in this very remaking process is our salvation. It is only as we submit ourselves to this remaking that we transform our naturally worthless selves into something useful to our Creator.

We are repulsed by pride in others. Someone has said that pride is the only disease that makes everyone sick except the fellow that has it. In fact, what is disgusting pride in another is healthy self-confidence in ourselves.

And of course, another's pride is so much easier to detect than our own.

But pride is beset with deadly peril. The proud person is difficult to reach. His pride keeps him a certain distance from any who would try to help, and even seeks to harm his benefactor. The man who thinks too highly of himself usually thinks too meanly of others, especially those who dare to challenge his superiority.

Pride also self destructs. This has been seen again and again in history.

Recall the end of Absalom, of Haman, of Saul, of Solomon. The man who does not learn to govern his pride eventually falls into the pit he digs for another.

The greatest peril of pride is that it sets us against God. "Pride goeth before destruction," says the Scripture, "and a haughty spirit before a fall" (Prov. 16:18). God will not tolerate idols, and ungoverned pride is idolatry of self. The writer of the book of James, quoting from Proverbs, warns us that "God resisteth the proud, but giveth grace unto the humble" (James 4:6).

Benjamin Franklin, when a boy, visited a New England preacher. Walking through a narrow corridor they approached a low, heavy beam. The preacher cautioned, "Stoop, Franklin, stoop!" But young Franklin was not about to stoop, and so struck his head against the beam. The minister said sharply "You are young and have the world before you. Stoop as you go through it, and you will miss many hard bumps." In old age, Franklin remembered the advice and wrote of "misfortunes brought upon people by carrying their heads too high."

We are never taller than when we stoop in humility before God; and never smaller than when we strut and boast of ourselves.

Well has the Wise Man written: "Before honour is humility." MM

Roman Empire being the strongest empire of the four, "dreadful and terrible and strong exceedingly."

We find in the days of Christ that this fourth kingdom of Rome existed in its consolidated form. It was not until the fourth century that it had two legs as in the image, eastern and western Rome. And today we see the feet of the body, part of iron and part of clay; partly strong and partly weak; broken remnants throughout western Europe.

Why We Believe

Why do we believe the Bible Divine, when it predicts in advance the details of four world kingdoms, which are now recorded as confirmed history?

Do you suppose any man on the face of the earth could have predicted such unless by Divine guidance?

Our founder continues: "Say to me that any man could have been the author of that—say to me that the Bible is wholly human? It cannot be! Impossible! Utterly impossible!"

The Fifth Empire

Now what about a fifth empire? Is there any possibility? Not according to the prophecy in the vision of the image; not according to the prophecy in the vision of the four beasts. There were to be four, and only four. The fifth kingdom was to be something different—the eternal kingdom of Christ.

What does this mean?

To quote from our founder again: "Look at Napoleon Bonaparte, and the little German Garibaldi. Take the late Napoleon. He understood the tactics of war better than anyone else in the world of his time, and had the best drilled soldiers. He started out the head of France and attempted to conquer Prussia. Having conquered Prussia, he intended then to conquer Russia. Having conquered those two powers he could have conquered the world and established a universal worldwide empire, and his son Louis would have been its emperor.

"Why did these great men all fail to establish a world empire? It was because the Bible is Divine, and predicts that the next or fifth world kingdom is to be none other than the kingdom of God.

"The Bible tells us (citing the vision of the image, Daniel 2) that 'in the days of these kings'—at the completion of their time—'*shall the God of heaven set up a*

kingdom.' No question about it, no other possibilities. Here is the kingdom represented by the little stone, which smote the image on the feet—not on the head, not on the arm, not on the thigh, but on the feet, down at the end of all these kingdoms—and became a great mountain and filled the whole earth."

We believe these things, because there is no power upon earth that can show that men could have predicted them and foretold such great and wonderful events as these four world kingdoms of men, except by Divine knowledge.

Mr. Nichols continues: "Never say to me that there is nothing in the Bible to show that it is of Divine origin. Take this Bible and study these testimonies for yourselves, and make up your mind from them and you will never be an infidel or a free-thinker. Never."

How Prophecy Affects Us

Now all this prophecy affects *us*, and affects us profoundly. We find ourselves living today right at the end of the kingdoms of men. The little stone has not yet struck the image on the feet, but it soon will. And it will grow, and grow, until it fills the whole earth.

Just as surely as the four previous kingdoms rose and fell as predicted, so we can have confidence that this fifth kingdom, the kingdom of Christ, will some day be established upon earth, just as the Bible predicts.

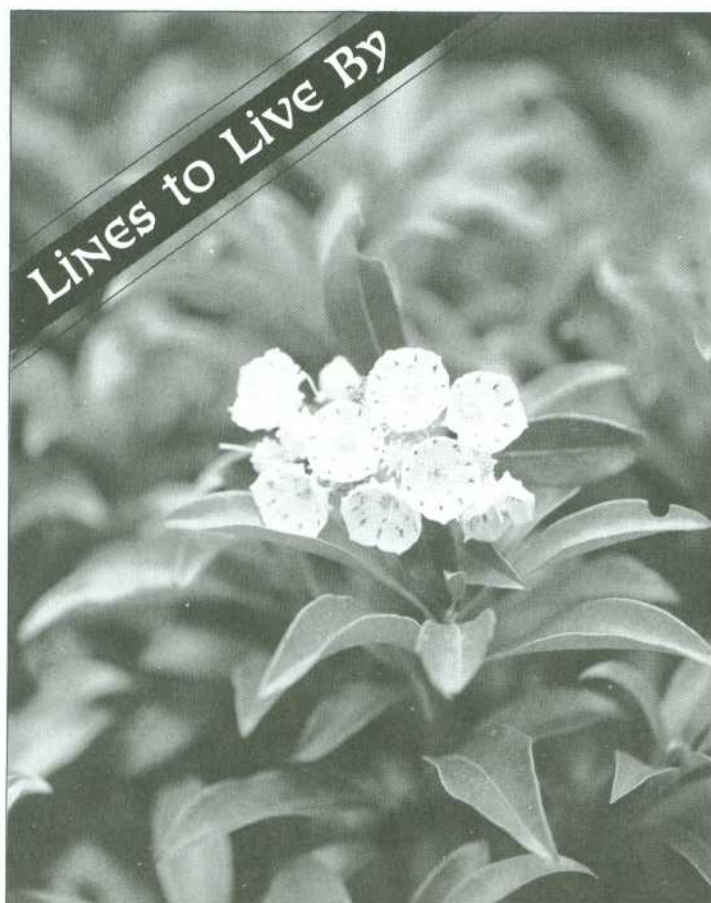
Christ is coming to set up a new and universal government upon earth. This prophecy is repeated in different words more than 300 times in the New Testament alone. The Bible is filled with prophecies of the blessings and prosperity that will come with that new government. There will be universal prosperity, universal peace, no more sickness, pain, poverty, war, bloodshed, suffering, crime or injury. There will be one worldwide, stable government for the good of all.

This is the hope of the Bible. This is *our* hope. It is no dream or vision of the night; it is sure, it is certain, it is true. These things shall be!

Let us show by our lives each and every day that we really believe it. Let us conduct ourselves as citizens of that fifth, great kingdom. Let us *be* now what we will *want to be then*, for soon, very soon—whether we believe it or not, whether we are ready or not—these things shall be!

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Step by Step

*He does not lead me year by year
Nor even day by day.
But step by step my path unfolds;
My Lord directs my way.*

*Tomorrow's plans I do not know,
I only know this minute;
But He will say, "This is the way,
By faith now walk ye in it."*

*And I am glad that it is so.
Today's enough to bear;
And when tomorrow comes, His grace
Shall far exceed its care.*

*What need to worry then, or fret?
The God who sent His Son
Holds all my moments in His hand
And gives them, one by one.*



Enough

HERE is task enough for any day: to discover the irregular impulses of our human nature, to dig them out, look squarely at them, hold them up to the light of God until we see them as they really are; then go to work and transform them into what they ought to be.

What is our duty to God? It is not to fill our lives with what is especially difficult or unusual. It is to live with all our heart where God has placed us, to be soft and pliable in His hands. It is to live with a will no longer divided between God and any earthly interest, but with what someone has called an "unrelenting renunciation of all which does not moment by moment enter into God's plans, in short with a pure vision of God to which one sacrifices the irregular impulses of human nature."

This is task enough for any day.



Service for the King of kings brings joy to the heart—a joy that the world cannot supplant. It is the desire of every true servant of Christ to do something continually to please Him. There is no service that has equalled or will equal it, and none that yields such copious returns. God is rich, and those who serve Him are rich and do not lack for any good thing. Said the great Apostle, "But my God shall supply all your need according to his riches in glory by Christ Jesus" (Phil. 4:19).

No Place for Pretence

A peasant once admonished a churchgoer: "Take heed that thou be as good as men believe thee." This is good advice for us, too. We must be honest, sincere and humble, for if we fall it may cause others to stumble as well.

We are the only ones, besides God, who know our secret thoughts, and when one who professes falls, it is not easily discerned whether a good man has gone wrong or a bad man has been found out. Let us strive to put away all falsehood and be exactly what we profess to be, eager for the coming of the Lord.

The last day lies hid; therefore watch every day."

Our Father, well we know that it depends upon ourselves whether the coming of our King shall bring joy or terror to us. If our life were ended tomorrow, would we be willing to have it judged as to its sincerity of motive, and earnestness of endeavor, and its faithfulness and loyalty to our Lord? Or would we beg for a few more days in which to prepare to meet the Judge? Help us, O our Father, so to live each day that we may be among the number whom Jesus will pronounce blessed, whom the Lord when He comes shall find watching.

—Contributed



Be such a man and live such a life that if every man were such as you, and every life a life like yours this earth would be a paradise.

The Golden Rule may be old, but it hasn't been used enough to show any wear.



Faith or Feelings?



In the Christian experience, faith can remain constant regardless of changing conditions. On the contrary, our feelings and emotions vary according to circumstances.

Martin Luther composed a tribute to faith in these magnificent words:

*For feelings come and feelings go,
And feelings are deceiving;
My warrant is the Word of God,
Naught else is worth believing.*

*Though all my heart should feel condemned
For want of some sweet token,
I know One greater than my heart
Whose Word cannot be broken.*

*I'll trust in God's unchanging Word,
And will forsake it never;
For though all things shall pass away,
His Word shall stand forever.*

Faith comes before feeling—even in the dictionary. We will have to preserve this order if we are to persevere triumphantly.

An experience in the early life of Jesus, as it might have been, for "He was tempted in all points like as we are, yet without sin."

Broader Fields

Part II

In Part I, Demetrius, a merchant from Alexandria enroute from Egypt to Damascus, was having his chariot wheels rebuilt at the village carpenter shop of Nazareth. But as the days went by, he found himself getting more than chariot wheels. It was all so strange, that he, a wealthy, powerful, cultured business man should be spending so much precious time in a hot, dusty, unheard-of little town in the highlands of Galilee, for no better reason than the fascinating influence of a clever young Jewish workman. But here he was.

IN two more days the work would be done, the chariot ready for the road. In the gathering dusk the two men met by agreement, the carpenter wondering what the "important business" of the merchant could be. Together they strolled to the edge of the village, to a spot where the cool evening breeze flowed unbroken down the hillside. Seated on a ruined stone wall they watched the dim, scattered lights twinkle out one by one in the valley below; the evening planet flamed low in the western sky, while across the Jordan a nearly-full moon was rising. A boy drove a

small flock of sheep down the hill, their footsteps soft in the dust of the roadway. The air was filled with the pleasant sounds and scents of a summer evening. Life in the country *did* have its compensations, the merchant mused. They talked of commonplaces, sparingly. Adroitly the Greek drew the conversation to ambition, success, power.

"Jesus," he asked abruptly, "are you contented and happy here?"

The carpenter thought a moment.

"Happy, yes. Very happy indeed. But who could be contented, with the world's need so great, its darkness and ignorance and misery so deep?"

It was not the reply Demetrius had expected, but it gave him an opening.

"That is true, my boy. Only a clod could be content. But what are you doing to relieve the world's need and ignorance? I know you are trying to make a good man of yourself, which helps that much; but that is not enough. The world needs leaders, trained men, men of genius to remake the human mind, and through it, the world."

"Such men are hard to find, are they not?"

"Extremely hard. And in my travels I have for some

years been on the watch for promising material, young men who may, with proper training and education, become the world's future leaders. Now this is my purpose in talking to you tonight. To be direct, you have this ability, if I am any judge of men. You have a great mind, and an incorruptible character. All you lack is training and opportunity, neither of which are to be had in the barren hills of a remote province."

"Just what is your suggestion, Sir?"

"Come with me to Alexandria, and I will make you famous. I have no children of my own, and I have wealth; how better can a man use his money for the good of humanity? Given in alms, it is soon eaten up and forgotten; given to develop honest and capable leaders, its influence goes on and on. Here there is nothing; there, everything. Rome is too much concerned with political power and military greatness; Athens is dead, living on the memory of its past glories; only in Alexandria are culture and science and philosophy given room to flower. There East meets West, and out of the mingling of ideas come new systems of thought, new light for the world's darkness. There we have libraries so vast that I cannot even begin to describe them. To its lecture halls flock the most brilliant minds of the Empire. A year or two in the great university will fit you to take your place in the councils of the philosophers; in a few more years the sciences will be yours. Then travel—have you traveled?"

"Only to Jerusalem; twice to Caesarea. Yes, come to think of it, I have been in Egypt. I lived there when a very small child, but I remember practically nothing of it."

"Think of the broadening influence of visiting Rome, Greece, the great cities of Asia, Gaul, Spain. See how other people live, what their problems are. After all, the

world is larger than Palestine."

"It *would* be very pleasant, given the proper circumstances. But—I have other things to consider. I am the principal support of the family, and times are hard."

"I will provide for them," was the merchant's ready reply. "Either here or in Alexandria, if they prefer. The climate is better there, anyway, and far greater opportunities for your brothers. Think of their future, too."

"Then, too," the youth objected, "I have always made my own living, and the idea of being supported by another does not appeal to me."

"A poor excuse. You are foolish if you let your independent spirit stand in the way of your success. We are in this world to help one another, and the good you will do in the world will more than repay my small investment. Others have helped me; I can help you over a barrier, and you can help thousands upon thousands of your fellowmen—an ever-widening stream. My fortune came from the public; now I have an opportunity to repay my debt to them. Also"—with a self-deprecating laugh—"it will gratify my vanity in years to come to be pointed out as the man who discovered and gave to the world the greatest teacher of modern times—Jesus the Galilean!"

The carpenter was absently tossing pebbles one by one down the slope. At length he spoke deliberately.

"So you really think that Alexandria offers broader fields than Palestine? We have produced some great men, you know."

"True, but hardly known and without influence beyond the bounds of your little country, except as your people have emigrated to other parts of the Empire. In Alexandria we produce *world* figures. I might name Archimedes, Aristophanes, Eratosthenes, Euclid and Hero, to say nothing of a host of other great men, scientists, philosophers, artists, writ-

*"My boy,
this is it.
This is your
opportunity,
knocking loudly
at your front door.
Don't let it
get away."
(Demetrius)*

ers. Even your own countryman, Philo Judaeus, is now one of the bright stars in our sky. You have heard of him?"

"Yes"—shortly and with a trace of disdain, which the Greek pretended not to notice.

"Here, as I said before, there is nothing. You are an excellent carpenter for your age, but carpenters always die poor, and your poverty will be a millstone about your neck as long as you live, preventing the development of your natural abilities. Not that you haven't done pretty well, in spite of your handicaps. Why, they tell me that when you were twelve years old you went to Jerusalem and talked the rabbis down in open discussion. With a start like that, and proper education from now on, the intellectual world would be at your feet in a short time."

The young man threw a whole handful of pebbles down the hill and stood up.

"Somebody has been telling tales, it seems. I thought perhaps that affair had been forgotten. At any rate, it was premature, entirely out of order, and I have never tried it again."

"Why do you talk like that? Never

*Was it possible that the
Father's will might be revealed
through this stranger who had so suddenly
and mysteriously come into his life?*

sell yourself at a discount. But to go on, there is no denying that opportunities in this little country are very limited. At the very top is the high priesthood, which, of course, would be out of the question for you, since you are not of a priestly family, and also too honest a man. Next is a seat in the Sanhedrin, which is an empty honor, for the Sanhedrin is powerless to act without the approval of the Romans. And even this is very unlikely for you, due to your lack of education. You see, at every turn the untrained man is blocked. Unless you are content to live and die an obscure village carpenter, this is your opportunity."

"I have no intention of remaining in my present condition. When my brothers are able to take over the shop and make the living, there will be a change. I am fully determined to make something of myself, and to leave the world better for my presence in it. I have always felt that some day, somehow, my great opportunity would come to me, even in Nazareth."

"My boy, this is it. This is your opportunity, knocking loudly at your front door. Don't let it get away. One more argument, and then you can think it over, if you like. Even with equal advantages and preparation, Palestine is not a good place in these days to begin reforms. The Jews have a reputation for sedition, as you know. The Emperors do not understand them and make no effort

to do so, but watch them with suspicion. Ideas and abilities which would bring you fame and fortune elsewhere are more than likely to crucify you as a rebel in Judea."

He rose to his feet and stretched his cramped limbs. "Anyway, young man, that's my proposition. I have no selfish interest in the matter, except as I told you, but I do not like to think of your wasting your life and your fine mind in this narrow corner when broader fields lie before you. In all probability I shall not pass again this way. If you decide to accept, I will call on my return from Damascus, before the winter rains begin, and take you back to Egypt with me."

They parted at the gate of the inn. In the darkness of the shop, Jesus the carpenter tested the paint on the new wheels; by morning it would be dry. The chariot body stood on blocks in the alley. In its seat, bathed in the calm moonlight, he fought his battle. And prayed. As never before in his short life, he knew temptation. Was it possible that the Father's will might be revealed through this stranger who had so suddenly and mysteriously come into his life? There were so many unusual features in the affair; why should such a man turn aside in his travels to visit a mean place like Nazareth? And why should the accident occur at this particular time and place? Was there a Divine purpose in it all?

Life was beautiful and thrilling, and he was young. Nazareth was a

dull place, and Palestine a narrow field; that he knew right well. He also knew, even apart from the stranger's flattering words, that he was meant for greater things, that a mighty mission was in store for him. But was the offer of Demetrius the connecting link? Even Abraham, he reflected, was called to go into another land before his work really began. The invitation had opened a door into a fascinating unknown world, and the temptation was strong.

He could consult his mother Mary—her wise counsel had never failed in any time of trial—but she was now asleep, and this thing must be settled tonight. Besides, he knew exactly what she would say; and subconsciously he knew she would be right. But he wanted to see it for himself. So the hours passed one by one as the struggle went on, and it was far past midnight when Jesus stole softly to his bed, calm in the peace of decision, for better or for worse.

The morning was still cool when Demetrius approached the little shop and stared in surprise at the completed chariot. Jesus had risen early, and in the freshness of the morning, beneath the dusty fig trees in the back yard, had told his story to his mother, the guide of his youth. He was not surprised at her advice, nor she by his decision; both rejoiced that their minds were one. Then he had called the somewhat reluctant James and Josés from their beds to help with the assembling of the chariot.

"Bring on your horses," was the carpenter's cheery greeting. "Let's take it out on the road and see how it runs."

The Greek went his way, somewhat surprised that nothing had been said of the other matter. When he returned with the horses and driver, Jesus called him aside.

"Leave your man here, if you don't mind....I have never driven so

fine a team as yours, and I should like to take the reins for a little, by your leave."

The rough road he chose wound up to the crest of the hill, and there Jesus halted. For a long time the men gazed at the magnificent panorama spread before them, saying little except as the carpenter pointed out places and objects of interest. All about them stretched the great, fertile plain of Esdraelon. The Jordan valley lay dim in the east, the Mediterranean beyond the western horizon with the ancient hills of Samaria sharply defined against the southern sky. Northward towered the snowy heights of Mount Hermon. At length Jesus turned to the older man.

"I presume you are waiting for an answer to your very kind offer of last night." He spoke hesitantly, his face colored with strain and embarrassment, for after all, he was young and

inexperienced, and this was a serious matter. "I wish to thank you again for it—it was kind and generous of you—but—but I have decided not to accept."

The Greek was not so much surprised as he might have been. He was not surprised at anything this unpredictable young man might do. He looked hard at Jesus, who returned the gaze calmly, almost defiantly.

"No?" Then after a pause, "Mind telling me your reasons?"

"Not at all." The carpenter drew a long breath. "It is only fair that I should state them, although it is quite a story, and you may not fully understand. I hope you will.

"The fact is, I am *afraid* to go."

"Afraid?" The merchant smiled. "You would soon overcome that. I know how it is—"

"Not in the way you mean." Jesus

"Alexandria offers too little; the field is too narrow. I have great plans for my own future, and I believe, that my God has a work for me to do in this world of men." (Jesus)

was speaking with more assurance now. "Alexandria offers too little; the

Give me, O God, a will that is strong and steady.

Help me

*Not to give up easily;
Not to be easily annoyed, but to keep calm and patient;
Not to be easily led, but to stand alone, if necessary, for right;
To say No and keep saying No to anything wrong;
Not to lose interest so quickly, but to concentrate on finishing everything I begin.*

Keep me from being petty, and quarrelsome, and faultfinding with anyone.

Give me justice,

*Always to be fair in thought and deed;
Always to think of others first;
Never to be a partner in injustice.*

Give me self-control,

*Never to do what I know I shall be sorry for later;
Never to hurt another or to bring shame upon myself;
Never to put any selfish gratification ahead of duty.*

I want above all to have my life fit for You to see, honor and bless. Amen.

"I do not want death to be the end. I want to rise again, to live eternally. I want to attend a school where the courses may last for a thousand years or more, and still no time be lost. I want to talk with and learn from the immortal angels of God." (Jesus)

field is too narrow. I have great plans for my own future, and I believe, in all modesty, that my God has a work for me to do in this world of men; and so far as I can discern, it is His will that I perform, or at least begin, it here. Quite naturally I should enjoy the sights of Alexandria, the libraries and lecture halls, the contact with brilliant minds, the travel to far lands, the possibility of fame and fortune; but there is something better than all this. I am afraid—afraid these things might interfere with the things that really matter."

"What, in your estimation, are the things that matter?"

"Truth!" The carpenter's dark eyes flashed as his words became more impassioned. "Truth, mercy, justice,

and the Kingdom of Heaven."

"The Kingdom of Heaven? I do not understand."

"I know you do not."

"But do not our great scientists and philosophers lead in the search for truth?" Demetrius was again on the defensive, backed into a corner by the other man's personality.

"One kind. But not the truth which will give life. When the world is at my feet, when I have attained to fame and fortune—*what then?* Where is Archimedes today?"

"He is dead."

"And Euclid, and Aristophanes?"

"Dead."

"And Hero, and Eratosthenes, and Theocritus?"

"Also dead. But—"

"That is just my point, Sir. Life at its very best is too short, and the price of living the life you offer me is too high. I want to *live*."

"But you, too, will die."

"True. That is the fate of all men. I may even be crucified, as you warned me. But I do not want death to be the end. I want to rise again, to live *eternally*. I want to attend a school where the courses may last for a thousand years or more, and still no time be lost. I want to talk with and learn from the immortal angels of God. I want to travel—to travel to those stars we saw last night, the homes of these glorified beings. The Roman Empire is much too small for me. I want to have power and dominion in a Kingdom of righteousness that will spread from sea to sea, over lands not now known, long after Rome has crumbled to dust."

"Listen, my boy," the Greek broke in, impatiently, "do you really believe all that?"

The carpenter looked him squarely in the eye, and Demetrius winced in spite of himself under that clear gaze.

"Sir, unless I believed it, I would be mad not to accept your offer. If you or Alexandria can give me more

than I hope to gain, as I have told you, I will gladly come with you. As it is, I am afraid of Alexandria. I would get lost in a wilderness of unprofitable speculation, as my countryman Philo Judaeus has lost himself, his faith, his hope, and even his common sense. It would distract my attention and clutter my mind with small things. It might even make me contented—contented with lower ideals, with an unfinished work. It would rob me of my independence and freedom to follow the light as I see it, for while eating the bread of another I would be under obligation to return favor for favor. In short, Alexandria would mold me into something which I have no desire to be. It is better that I should stay in Galilee, where I can find myself, until my time comes, preparing to be about my heavenly Father's business. . . . I hope you understand, Sir."

Demetrius shook his head. He had lost contact a long way back.

"Young man," he said slowly, "I do *not* understand. I respect your zeal and your faith, but it just doesn't make sense. . . . No, it doesn't make sense."

But that, of course, was what Jesus had rather expected him to say, so he was not surprised. He took the reins and turned the chariot around.

"The wheels seem to be all right, don't they?" he said, with an engaging smile. "If they are not, bring them back and we will make them good. Your bill is a pound and four shekels. And if you ever come this way again, stop and dine with us. It has been a pleasure to serve you."

A dozen years later, when word reached Alexandria that one Jesus of Nazareth in Galilee had been crucified as a rebel in Jerusalem, Demetrius wagged his head sagely. He had warned the young man, he had tried hard to make something of him; but he would not listen. A dreamer, a

fanatic—that is the usual end of such men. Well, that was the end of that matter. He heard rumors of the Resurrection, too, but he did not believe them. Things like that just didn't happen nowadays. Jesus was dead, and his insignificant following, if he had any, would soon be dispersed. He would forget the whole affair, his conscience being clear. There were other things that really mattered—things like money, learning, power.

And forget it he did, until one day some few years later when his path again crossed the territory where the strange young Carpenter had lived. Quite by accident he met first one, then another, and another of Jesus'

followers. Their faces were radiant. They spoke with certainty, There was no doubt at all in their minds. Jesus had died, and *was alive* again! They *knew* it—they had seen Him, they had talked with Him. He had been with them a full forty days after His resurrection. Then, suddenly He had departed from them. Now He was in heaven, but He would be coming back, just as He had said. His destiny was sure . . . a kingdom, dominion, power would be His . . . forever!

And they said further, "There shall be a resurrection in the last Day and all who have faithfully sought for glory and honor and eternal life shall receive it."

The traveler from Alexandria marveled. What did it all mean? He pondered deeply the things he heard and saw. He had to admit it, at least to himself, that these lowly followers of Jesus had something. Never had he seen such faith, such hope, such radiance. "Truly," he told himself, "they serve a great God!"

Suddenly the things he had been working for all his life seemed to sink into the dust. Money, learning, power, what were they worth, anyway? They did not satisfy, they could not give life. They were nothing—nothing at all without a great God. What were they anyway . . . when compared to everlasting life! MM

OUR READERS WRITE

So Much Ahead

Our fortunes or our misfortunes in life shouldn't dampen our spirits, when we look ahead to millions and billions of years living with the angels, just for learning to control ourselves and being obedient to God's every command during this short life.

Iowa

W. P.

way of remembrance," we know from experience it is necessary to be stirred up by being tested to prove our sincerity and to remove any offending fault which we may be harboring in our hearts. How we must always bear in mind to "keep thy heart with all diligence; for out of it are the issues of life."

Australia

J. B.

Changing the Inside

We cannot change our lives as one would a garment, by taking off one and putting on a new one. Rather the change must come from the inside, getting rid of all the wrong in our hearts. We should follow Jesus' advice and "first make clean the inside of the cup and the platter," not be as the Pharisees whose only concern was to make a good outward show of piety.

Only the *pure in heart* shall see God.

Texas

C. F.

After the Clouds

We know there is a new morning coming. Since the beginning of time, "morning" suggests renewal, delight, joy. "Weeping may endure for a night," wrote the Psalmist long ago, "but joy cometh in the morning" (Psa. 30 : 5).

King David in his last message to his people saw prophetically the dawning of the better Day "as the light of the morning, when the sun riseth, even a morning without clouds." A morning without clouds!

It is coming. May we make each of our steps count, use the time remaining in quick preparation. Let us prepare, that we may greet that eternal morning with joy!

Nebraska

M. M.

Work Closely with God

Close working with God by prayer and faith will give us greater strength and courage to meet every challenge of each day.

As we "wrap" ourselves around the Lord, we shall be working to make ourselves over into that new creation which after God is created "in righteousness and true holiness." Our hope shall become stronger, brighter and real, as we keep in the Truth and the Life exemplified by His beloved Son. By following in His steps and the wonderful example He gave to us in His unending love and obedience to His Heavenly Father, we shall also be able to overcome everything of the earthly and bear that image of perfection which He portrayed.

As the apostle Peter reminded those brethren "to stir up their pure minds by

With God's Help — We Can!

We really need to check up on ourselves to see what we have accomplished in getting rid of the old man and how we have been doing toward building a new man this past year, past month and past week.

We know we can with God's help—that is, if we really want to. And we can thank God that He has allowed us to have much help. It is up to us to work out our salvation with fear and trembling. We must strive, press, run for the prize set before us.

We can thank God that we do have our Holy Bible to read, study and meditate on.

South Carolina

H. C.

Afraid of

*Belief in demons
and devils is as
ancient and as
universal as the
human race.
But it is not
biblical.*

THIS is an age of phenomenal scientific progress, together with almost unbelievable mental stagnation. Master minds penetrate deeper and deeper into the mysteries of space. At the same time, millions still wrestle with a world strangely real and threatening to them—the world of demons and spirits.

Belief in devils and demons is as ancient and as universal as the human race. A close kin to polytheism (belief in many gods) and animism (the attributing of conscious life to nature and natural objects), belief in demons has been a religion, a science, or a novelty among practically all peoples who have left any record of themselves upon this planet. Among the ancient Babylonians, Assyrians, and later among the Persians, evil spirits—as well as good ones—were thought to be continually involved in human affairs. They even pictured them as organized into a complete hierarchical system, having a supreme ruler and subordinate chiefs. The Chinese, the Dravidians, the Arabs, the Japanese, the Indians and a thousand more peoples and sects believed evil spirits abounded. Among these different groups, the spirits had differing names; but their activities and their character were essentially the same.

“The great ethnic faiths of India, China, and Japan major in demonism, as well as the animistic religions of Africa, South America, and some islands,” says a current theologian in support of the belief. He sees all this demon belief as “historical evidence” that demons *do* exist—because the belief in demons has been so widespread for so many centuries and appears to be almost instinctive in the mind of man. “Men sense the power of Satan and demons in their lives,” he says.

But must we rely upon such “evidence” as the thoughts of men for our belief? What about all the centuries the earth was thought to be flat—did erroneous reasoning change the shape of the earth? What if men have always felt and still feel today that they are subject to a superpower they cannot control—might not that power be their own undisciplined will? Must we rely for evidence upon *feelings*? *Does not one's mind influence what that person thinks he feels?*

The belief in demons and devils is usually part of a “dualism” in religion, through which the world is seen as the battleground between two opposing forces, i.e., good and evil, God and Satan. This view of religion is in striking contrast to that of the early Hebrew people, whose faith proclaimed *one* God supreme and all-powerful, whose authority stands forever immutable and unassailed. Never once in the entire Biblical record preserved for us do we read where people were advised to fear demons or to beware of literal devils or spirits of evil beyond human control. All this was part of the pagan religions practiced by Israel's neighbors, and from which they were commanded to keep themselves entirely separate. “Be careful not to be ensnared by inquiring about their gods, saying, How do these nations serve their gods? We will do the same” (Deut. 12:30, NIV).

Demons?

The entire Old Testament stands opposed to the belief in evil spirits. In fact, there is scarcely a mention made of such. Moses commanded the Israelites not to sacrifice to “devils” as other nations did, but this command in no way acknowledged their existence (Deut. 32:17). Psalm 106:37 tells of the “heathen” who “sacrificed their sons and their daughters to demons” (NIV) but this does not say that the “demons” were real spirit beings any more than the fact that pagan nations worshiped other “gods” says that these “gods” were real deities. The false “gods” and the “demons” were actually one and the same—the creation of human hands and minds.

At the time of Jesus, demonism was in full bloom among the Greeks and the Romans. And as the Jews came more and more into the influence of the Greek world, they too became absorbed with its superstitious ideas and practices. The Christian world also came to be affected, as the Greek beliefs in spirits together with the beliefs of other Oriental religions became popular. The movement started in obscurity, then burst into a vigorous, open religion that was practiced before all. It started morally indifferent and ended as the supposed cause of all wickedness, as well as physical and mental disease.

Such was the thinking of the world into which Jesus came teaching “about the kingdom of God” (NIV). It was an age “ruled by the black one [meaning “the devil”] and his hordes”—“it lieth in the evil one,” says a historian of that period.

What was Jesus’ attitude toward it all? Did He join in the superstitious

beliefs of the people? or did He give silent consent? or did He ever suggest to them that their belief in the world of spirits was a *right* belief? No, He did none of these. There is not a word in any of the four Gospels which tells us Jesus either believed in demons or taught men to believe in them.

Why, then, did He “drive out demons”? Why did He speak to demons and tell them to come out? Why do the Gospels tell of Jesus’ casting out devils as though the demons did really possess people and had to be evicted?

During that age, anything opposed to good health and well-being was called a “demon,” because the people of that time thought demons were literally responsible for man’s miseries and bad actions. In their minds, demons were no mere theory; they formed a vital concept of existence at that time. The whole world and the atmosphere were thought of as filled with devils which ruled every phase and form of life.

Now Christ’s mission was not to uproot all the superstitions of the day, though we may be sure He recognized it as mere superstition. He came to show them the way to a better life—a life in which they did not *need* to believe in demons to explain what made men sin, for in that better life there would be no sin. He pointed them to a world to come where there would be no demons of sickness or suffering, for such things simply would not *be*. If His hearers accepted His teaching, their ideas of demonism would fall of their own weight; for the teaching of Christ simply did not need any such.

Therefore we do not hear once of Jesus’ preaching on the reality or non-reality of demons. He did, however, try to convince them that He was the Son of God and superior in power to the forces which they feared. This was doubtless one of His main purposes in “casting out devils,” as He did on several occasions, or forcing what they called “demons” to respond to His higher authority. He wanted people to recognize Him for what He was and is, the Son of God. By showing His supremacy over this universal belief He could convince them of His own power and authority as the Son of God Almighty.

We have no reason to believe that Jesus Himself believed in demons. Never once did He attribute sin, or sickness, or suffering to a demon. We must distinguish as between the fact and the framework. Jesus used the

(Continued on page 26)

By healing men’s minds and bodies, and by triumphing over death, Jesus showed men the true power of the living God, His Father, and called them to rise above the imaginary world of demons.

What About "666"?

"Would somebody please give me some light on Revelation, chapter 13? I do not think we need worry about Russia; but worry more about Rome. I heard a sermon on it, and the minister took it just as it says. Others say it is not so. I have heard others who think the 666 refers to numbers on our license plates, social security numbers, etc. Something has to be true. I look at it this way; if the 666 is not true, what is true in the Bible?"

Revelation 13 expresses in highly figurative language the Roman monopoly, first pagan and then papal, upon all mankind. The pagan power is first resisted by the Christians, next assimilated by them. Later the apostate Christians, gone from bad to worse, rear an image to perpetuate paganized worship and compel universal homage under penalty of death.

Two beasts are seen to arise and stalk the land. The first "was like unto a leopard, and his feet were as the feet of a bear, and his mouth, the mouth of a lion" (Rev. 13:2). This beast, Pagan Rome, the fourth world power, had absorbed the three preceding world empires: Greece, Medo-Persia, and Babylon, which had many centuries ago been foreseen by Daniel as identical symbols (the lion, bear, and leopard). "The dragon," which is clearly defined by the Revelator as "that old serpent, called the Devil, and Satan" (12:9; 20:2), gave to this Roman beast "his power, and his seat, and great authority."

"And I saw one of his heads as it were wounded to death; and his deadly wound was healed" (v. 3).

Pagan Rome suffered a serious wound when, under Constantine and Theodosius, pagan temples were closed and the worship of idols proscribed as illegal. But later the wound was healed. In other words, paganism was revived and restored under another name, as degenerating Christians began to re-style and then accept pagan thought.

The second beast which John beheld "had two horns like a lamb, and he spake as a dragon" (v. 11). This is Papal Rome in her most characteristic aspect—under disguise. Tear away the false front, the mask of lamb-like professions, and what have you? Dragon-like features,

dragon-like language, dragon-like demeanor. The beast is the dragon re-dressed! This is revealing.

This beast—externally lamb-like, internally dragon-like—engages in one activity which betrays his identity. The principal motive of this beast, according to the text, is to keep the pagan power alive, active, the object of universal veneration. In order to achieve its purpose, Papal Rome is described as compelling earth's inhabitants to make an image to the first beast and then fall down before it. Pagan Rome had fallen, but pagan customs were enshrined, adored, absorbed. Whether great or small, rich or poor, all were compelled to worship the image of the first beast or suffer the death penalty (vs. 12-15). This was actually true during the Dark Ages and the Inquisition.

Revelation 13:16-17, reads: "And he causeth all, both small and great, rich and poor, free and bond, to receive a mark in their right hand, or in their foreheads: and that no man might buy or sell, save he that had the mark, or the name of the beast, or the number of his name."

In a spiritual sense, to subscribe to any false doctrine is to have the mark of the beast. We might say that one who openly endorses and supports false doctrines has the mark in his forehead; one who simply assents because others believe them and it is policy to do so may be said to have the mark in his hand.

The Revelator indicates a time when Roman monopoly would be so tight that no man might "buy or sell" save he that had the mark of the beast. The entire passage being figurative, this can have no reference to literal merchandising, but the trafficking of men's souls. By the most apt of illustrations, in the book of Revelation those who promulgate false teachings are classified as "merchants." Always truth is free, "without money and without price" (Isa. 55:1-3); ministers of the true gospel accept no salary for their services (II Cor. 11:9; I Thess. 2:9).

These merchants of Babylon "teach for hire" and "divine for money" (Mic. 3:11); good seats are costly; indulgences to sin are bought with a price. During the Dark Ages all spiritual merchandising was controlled by the governing church so that no man might "buy or sell"

any doctrine which did not bear the mark of the beast. As the historian states, they fashioned dogmatic creeds and catechisms and forced men and women—under torture and many times threat of death—to subscribe to them. If any felt impelled to proclaim what he believed to be the truth, he had to do so according to the rules and discipline of the ruling church or face torture; many were cruelly tortured and others put to death because they dared declare anything in opposition to the man-made creeds.

Verse 5 reveals the length of time this unholy alliance of paganism and Papacy should endure. "And there was given unto him a mouth speaking great things and blasphemies; and power was given unto him to continue forty and two months." This period of complete apostasy from true religion is foretold repeatedly in the Scriptures, under different figures, and its duration is always the same, 1260 years. This apostasy is now a matter of history.

The "time and times and the dividing of time" of Dan. 7:25; the "time, times, and an half" of Dan. 12:7; the "time, and times, and half a time," of Rev. 12:14; the "forty and two months" of Rev. 11:2 and 13:5, and the "thousand two hundred and threescore days" of Rev. 11:3 and 12:6, all refer to the same length and the same period of time, the apostasy from the truth.

Prophetic periods are reckoned at thirty days to the month, 360 days to the year, hence the three and a half years, forty-two months, as well as the "thousand two hundred and three score days," are identical periods, 1260 days. But they are not literal days; prophetic time is reckoned a year for each day (Ezek. 4:6; Num. 14:33-34).

Verses 6 and 7 reveal how this power overcame the saints.

The last verse of Revelation 13 reads, "Here is wisdom. Let him that hath understanding count the number of the beast: for it is the number of a man; and his number is Six hundred threescore and six."

This number, 666, is one of the most controversial symbols in the book of Revelation. However, being the number of "a man" it seems reasonable to suppose that it refers to the head of the same system of darkness that

would prohibit the buying or selling of religious thought without its permission—the church of Rome.

Modern applications of the "666" to license plates or social security numbers, etc., may sound intriguing but they are wholly *without* Biblical support.

For a more detailed discussion of this subject, see our booklet, *The Great Apostasy*.

• Donation of Vital Organs

"What is your attitude on the donation of vital organs (e.g. heart or lungs) from still living but brain dead persons?"

From the standpoint of morality we see nothing in the Scriptures to condemn the practice. It has certainly furnished a better life for many of the recipients.

Living in a time when the power of the Holy Spirit has been withdrawn, we are totally dependent upon the skill of the physician and the laws of healing which God has built into our bodies. We should be thankful to God and the medical profession for the good that has resulted from these advanced medical techniques.

We are aware of the fact that some groups forbid this practice and especially blood transfusions on the Biblical prohibition "Ye shall eat no manner of blood" (Lev. 7:26). In actual practice it would be very difficult to eat any manner of flesh without eating at least a small amount of blood, yet the Bible does not condemn the eating of certain types of meat.

The Lord in giving Moses this prohibition against the eating of blood could have had several reasons. It could have been to teach respect for the life which is in the blood. It could also have been for reasons of health, or it could have been for moral reasons. The pagan nations surrounding the Israelites practiced disgusting rites many of which involved the drinking of blood.

But to equate the modern practice of transfusing blood into one's body through the veins to save or preserve life with the drinking of blood as part of a pagan rite or ceremony seems wholly unfair.

No, we see no Scriptural basis for condemning the transplanting of an organ from a dead body to improve or extend the life for another person. MM

**Here is a truth we need to record at the
very depth of our being:
that all our efforts for God count.**

Afraid of Demons?

(Continued from page 23)

framework provided by the ancient world—most people believed the cause of illness to be demon-possession; and when Jesus by the power of God cured an illness, the “demon departed,” in the language of the people. Medical science today would not attribute paralysis, deafness, blindness and madness to the powers of evil spirits or demons upon a person. This was, however, the belief of the victims of the diseases and the belief of the spectators who saw them cured. It would have been totally unrealistic for Luke to have recorded that Jesus caused the harmful bacteria to die that were causing the infection; or that He mended the severed nerve which was causing blindness; or that He replaced some fluid in the spine, the absence of which had caused paralysis. We could not expect such a record from the first century, any more than we could expect to unearth the original manuscript of the Gospel of Luke and find it preserved on microfilm.

We must see in Jesus' mission of “casting out devils” His overall purpose, as it pertained to the persuading of men, rather than to try to understand in our language today what every detail of the recorded miracle should mean. Whatever name or description we give to an event does not change its nature or its quality. To say that Jesus “cast out devils” in no way detracted from His greatness; rather, for the people of that time it was convincing evidence. For everyone who saw Him knew that He was different from those magicians and priests who usually “cast out devils.” When Jesus healed, it was not any magic word that produced a cure, but the God who heard and answered. It was not the method but the Man.

Jesus' whole approach to the mat-

ter was different. He never carried any superstitious charm, as did the exorcists of His day; He never used any special preparation or medication; He never put on special robes for the occasion to look impressive. He never asked for money. He performed His cures in love and mercy.

He spoke the word, and it was done.

And by healing men's minds and bodies, and by breaking the power of death, He showed them the true power of the living God, His Father, and called them to rise above the imaginary world of demons. MM

Obituary

Barbara C. Hornum

On Wednesday, April 13, we met to pay our last respects to a friend and sister, Barbara Carrie Hornum. Sister Hornum was born in 1895, had become acquainted with the church about 1950, and had lived among our Church congregation since about 1969.

How Sister Hornum became interested in the Megiddo Church is a singular story, for which we are indebted to her long-time friend, Sister Lottie Kapica, who resides in New Jersey:

“Somewhere she found the Megiddo literature in a wastebasket. She subscribed to the *Message* and sent for other literature. After reading the literature, she tucked the books away in a drawer and forgot about them. Some years later she decided to clean out the drawer. She took out the *Known Bible* and became seriously absorbed in it. ‘Why,’ she said, ‘here I had this treasure all the while and did not know it.’ At that time she was attending a small church in Zarapeth, N.J. She stopped, then decided to resume, taking with her the *Message*, in the hope of getting someone else interested in what she had found. But she found no one—until she met me. She handed me the *Message*, asking me if I would like to read it. I accepted, and had my eyes opened. For a time we kept meeting at this church, all the while discussing the true teachings of the Bible. After that she and I met Sundays in her home whenever I was able to get away.”

Sister Hornum had a sunny disposition and a strong personal philosophy of emphasizing the good, looking on

the bright side, making the best of any situation. She made it a point never to complain.

She was always helping someone—the sick, the elderly, the young, the busy—anyone she could. She also spent many hours helping with the mailing of the Church publications as long as she was able.

Her life's work is finished, and her record is in the hands of a just God who is “not unrighteous to forget your work and labour of love which ye have showed toward his name, in that ye have ministered to the saints, and do minister” (Heb. 6:10).

“Now if the rising of Christ from the dead is the very heart of our message, how can some of you deny that there is any resurrection?”

“For if there is no such thing as the resurrection of the dead, then Christ was never raised. And if Christ was not raised then neither our preaching nor your faith has any meaning at all. Further it would mean that we are lying in our witness for God, for we have given our solemn testimony that he did raise up Christ—and that is utterly false if it should be true that the dead do not, in fact, rise again! For if the dead do not rise neither did Christ rise, and if Christ did not rise, your faith is futile.... Moreover those who have died believing in Christ are utterly dead and gone.”

“Truly, if our hope in Christ were limited to this life only, we should, of all mankind, be the most to be pitied! But the glorious fact is that Christ was raised from the dead” (I Cor. 15:12-20, NIV) MM

Pentecost

WHEN “tongues like as of fire” descended upon the assembled group who were waiting in Jerusalem on that day of Pentecost and they “began to speak with other tongues,” an unenlightened onlooker might have simply shaken his head and raised his eyebrows. What were they doing? He couldn’t understand it, much less believe it.

But unbelief does not turn history into legend. The power actually came. And it came on the day of Pentecost, when the believers were all assembled together “with one accord, in one place” (Acts 2:1-2). Suddenly the apostles had within themselves a priceless possession, the Spirit of the living God. A miracle had occurred; Pentecost cannot be explained in any other way.

Pentecost was the birthday of a mission; it gave a powerful beginning to the Christian church. It launched the first great missionary effort, that of spreading

the Gospel to the then-known world, and the power behind that mission was the power of God, sent as the Holy Spirit. Now God had completed one stage of His plan. His Son had set the perfect example, had tasted death, been resurrected, and ascended to heaven to His Father. Now He had been glorified and rewarded, and had sent back this power as confirmation of His promise: “Ye shall receive power”—power by which they could spread the gospel as never before.

Pentecost saw the greatest manifestation of the Spirit of which we have record. It did not mark anything new in the divine method of operation, but it was greater power to fill a greater need; a larger company of individuals equipped to spread the message within a very short time. Jesus had possessed the power from His baptism and had imparted some of it to His disciples as they

had need. But throughout the Gospel Jesus is the dominant character and the emphasis is on *His* use of the great power both in healing and performing miracles.

The blessings of that great Pentecost immediately following Christ’s ascension into heaven were received by only a few. But the greater Pentecost is coming when, “saith God, I will pour out of my spirit upon all flesh: and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, and your young men shall see visions, and your old men shall dream dreams: and on my servants and on my handmaidens I will pour out in those days of my Spirit: and they shall prophesy” (Acts 2:17-18).

Such will be the abundant latter-day rain that will accompany the final harvest.

Shall we be allowed to participate in the blessings of that greater Pentecost? This is a question which we are answering every day by our lives. MM

Dynamite...Dynamo

THE New Testament word for “power” is *dynamis*. From this Greek word we get two English words. One is *dynamite*, the other *dynamo*.

Dynamite has tremendous explosive power. It can cleave great masses of rock and earth.

A dynamo is another kind of power—it is constant, ongoing power. It doesn’t make much noise, but it keeps lights burning hour after hour and turns the wheels of industry night and day.

The Holy Spirit which the apostles received at Pentecost so many centuries ago was dynamite. It was a taste of the tremendous power that God holds in His hand. It was mighty power to heal the sick, raise the dead, speak

in other languages, teach the gospel, and many other gifts. The effects were far-reaching.

We today do not have the “dynamite” of the Holy Spirit, but we are not left without any power. We have a great *dynamo* of faith and instruction, the written Word of God. This Word is a steady, ongoing source of power to all who attach themselves to it. It is “the power of God unto salvation to everyone that believeth” (Rom. 1:16).

Let us avail ourselves of our mighty dynamo, the Word of God. It is our God-given source of power that shall never fail until the real dynamite is with us again—when the Holy Spirit is renewed. MM

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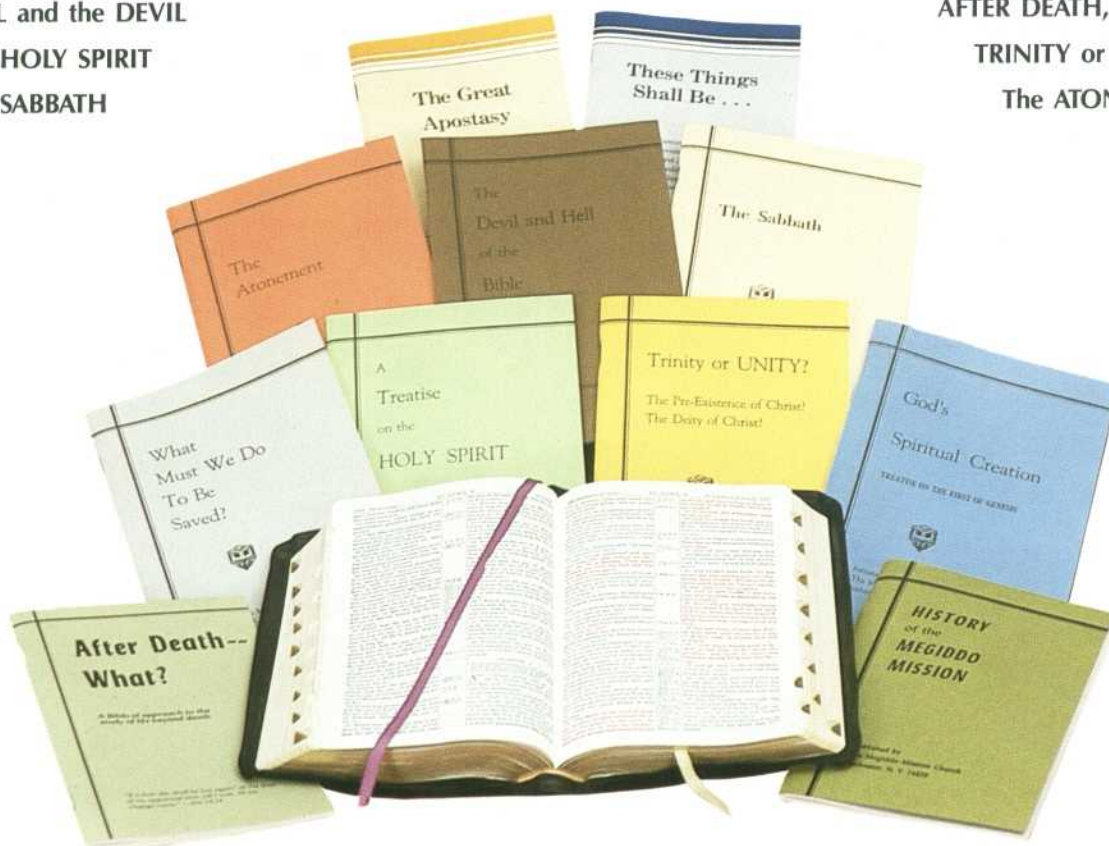
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