

Megiddo Message

DEVOTED TO THE CAUSE OF CHRIST

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

Ps. 119:105

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

Ps. 19:7

*These things shall be--a loftier race
Than e'er the world hath known shall rise
With flame of freedom in their soul,
And light of knowledge in their eyes.*

Megiddo Message

Vol. 58, No. 7

July, 1971

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

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

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

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

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

Second Class Postage paid at Rochester, New York.

INDEX

The Better Sacrifice of Christ	3
Freedom through Obedience	7
Timely Topics	8
A Double Obligation	9
The Upward Call	10
Understanding the Bible	13
The Sabbath	17
Keep The Faith	19
What Is Your Listening Level?	21
Christian Youth in These Times	22
Letters	24
Questions and Answers	25
Meditations on the Word	27
God! Send Us Men	Cover

Duty



Honor



Country

*Those three hallowed words reverently dictate
what you can be,
what you ought to be,
what you will be.*

*They are your rallying points:
To build courage when courage seems to fail;
To regain faith when there seems to be little cause for faith;
To create hope when hope becomes forlorn.*

*They build your basic character;
They make you strong enough to know when you are weak;
They make you brave enough to face yourself when you are afraid;
They make you humble and gentle in success.*

*They teach you not to substitute words for actions, nor
to seek the path of comfort, but
to face the stress and spur of difficulty and challenge.*

*They teach you to stand up in the storm, but
to have compassion on those who fall;
to master yourself before you seek to master others;
to have a heart that is clean, a goal that is high;
to reach into the future, yet never neglect the past;
to be serious, yet never to take yourself too seriously;
to be modest so that you will remember
the simplicity of true greatness;
the open mind of true wisdom,
the meekness of true strength.*

*They give you a temper of will,
a quality of imagination,
a vigor of the emotions,
a freshness of the deep springs of life.*

*They give you a predominance of courage over timidity,
an appetite for adventure over love of ease.*

*They create in your heart the sense of wonder,
the unfailing hope of what next,
and a joy and inspiration in life.*

The Better Sacrifice of Christ

PRAYER

Almighty and everlasting God, we adore Thee as the God of light and power. Shine through the clouds that dim our vision. Strengthen our weak hearts, that we may love Thee, and serve Thee in freedom and gladness. This world in which Thou hast permitted us to live is radiant with Thy presence. It is evident in all the beauties of nature.

We thank Thee for Thy Word which can act as a guide through life to keep our feet from stepping into the ways of evil. We bless Thee that in the fight with temptation Thou art our constant Helper.

Father, may we follow the life pattern of our great Example, Jesus Christ. May we die to sin as *did He*; may we do always the things that please Thee, as *did He*. May we put first things first, seeking first Thy Kingdom and the righteousness that will fit us for it, as *did He*; may we live in the world without being defiled by it, as *did He*; may we take up our cross daily and deny ourselves all ungodliness, as *did He*. May we engage in His better sacrifice, a crucifixion of the flesh, daily dying to sin.

Our Lord did not yield His will in servile obedience to the law of sin, but rather He conquered, subdued, and overcame the flesh, with all its propensities, appetites and passions. He put it to death, crucified and buried it, yielding His will wholly to Thine. May we so yield our own lives; may we crucify our flesh with all its affections and lusts, doing always the things that please Thee.

Father, we rejoice to know that Thy delight and satisfaction were not the outcome of beholding the sufferings of Thy dear Son as a sacrifice for sinners, or to appease Thy wrath.

Moral purity, Christian virtue, spiritual perfection, is the supreme good to be bestowed by the blood and cross of Christ. Christ's suffering and death was meant to be the great quickener of heroic virtue, and not as a substitute for sinners. He died for us as an example of a daily dying to sin that we should follow in His steps, and die to sin as He died. Help us to do just this. In Jesus' name. Amen.

DISCOURSE*

"Know ye not, that to whom ye yield yourselves servants to obey, his servants ye are to whom ye obey; whether of sin unto death, or of obedience unto righteousness?" (Rom. 6:16). Herein lies the secret of the better sacrifice of Jesus Christ; it was the sacrifice of His will.

BEFORE WE can possess a right understanding of the better sacrifice of Jesus Christ, it is needful for us to enquire and get to know

1) the need for

2) the meaning of

3) the purpose of the Scriptural teaching of animal sacrifices, as observed under the old Mosaic law, and which were but shadows and types of things to come.

The answer to these questions will enable us to arrive at the crux of the whole matter, and will be of special service in revealing the analogy between the type and the antitype. It will also help us to distinguish what was prefigured in the first or old animal sacrifices, and what was realized in, and accomplished by, the second or better sacrifice of Jesus Christ.

It is, therefore, to be noted that these animal sacrifices symbolized and conveyed the idea of conquering, surrendering, and slaying the flesh, or animal nature—putting to death the flesh, thus making an end of the deeds of the flesh, and thus removing the cause of sin, by thinking with God, as well as eliminating the evil. The Apostle states it thus: "Knowing this, that our old man is crucified with him, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin" (Rom. 6:6).

Man, as a rational, moral, and responsible being, has been deceived, corrupted, and enslaved by the law of sin, the inordinate desires and deceitful

* For this truly Biblical approach to Christ's death on the cross I am indebted to an article written by Philip Wilson of Glasgow, Scotland, in 1938.
—EDITOR

lusts of his lower animal nature, i. e., the flesh. This is clearly stated in Eph. 4:17—22. All this sin, corruption, bondage, and wretchedness of man, has been caused by the enticing and deluding powers of his lower or animal nature, which is antagonistic to his higher moral nature.

The works of the flesh are described in Gal. 5:19—21. Hence these animal sacrifices, when offered according to the Law, were typifying or showing forth the need of surrendering, sacrificing, and slaying the animal nature of man, as the origin and source of sin and evil, bondage, and wretchedness. Yet in all this symbolism of animal sacrifice, the Israelite, in his blindness of mind and hardness of heart, never was able to perceive this central truth contained in these sacrifices of his own self-will. The consequences were, and still are the same today; he remains a slave to sin, therefore never obtains a cleansing from the consciousness of sin. This is what is clearly stated in Heb. 10:1—4.

“For the law having a shadow of good things to come, and not the very image of the things, can never with those sacrifices which they offered year by year continually make the comers thereunto perfect. For then would they not have ceased to be offered? because that the worshipers once purged should have had no more conscience of sins. But in those sacrifices there is a remembrance again made of sins every year. For it is not possible that the blood of bulls and of goats should take away sins.”

In all these animal sacrifices and burnt offerings for sin, it is plainly stated in this 10th chapter of Hebrews that God had no delight, and the obvious reason for God’s displeasure was that these sacrifices could not take away sin. They were but a shadow of the good things which God did desire and delight in. God could not have any delight in the performance and perpetuation of these animal sacrifices, which failed to remove sin.

A question may be fittingly asked here: If these animal sacrifices, which God had no delight in, were unable to remove sin, how then could the physical crucifixion of Jesus Christ on Calvary be able to do

so? It is not at all possible, nor yet was it pleasing to God, neither does it constitute the better sacrifice of Jesus Christ.

It is of the greatest importance to note that sin, estrangement, condemnation and eternal death are brought about by man’s yielding to his worst self, obeying the principles and dictates of inordinate desires, which dwell in his flesh, and which are contrary to the law of God which dwells in the inner being, and which it is man’s duty always to obey.

We read in Rom. 6:16: “Know ye not, that to whom ye yield yourselves servants to obey, his servants ye are to whom ye obey; whether of sin unto death, or of obedience unto righteousness?”

Herein lies the secret of the better sacrifice of Jesus Christ; it was the sacrifice of His will. Thus, instead of Him yielding up His will to obey the law of sin, by the allurements and inordinate desires of His flesh or animal nature, He overcame them. He “was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin” (Heb. 4:15).

Jesus Christ did not yield His will in servile obedience to the law of sin, but rather He conquered, crushed, subdued, and overcame the flesh, His lower nature with all its propensities, appetites, and passions. He put it to death, crucified and buried it, and He was then able to yield His will to the law of God. Thus, then, as obedience to the law of sin brings condemnation and death, so also obedience to the law of God brings righteousness and life. This is the better sacrifice of Jesus Christ. It is *the* sacrifice which alone removes sin. It is *the* sacrifice which redeems. It is *the* sacrifice through which is brought life, righteousness, and peace. And it is the *only* sacrifice that God is pleased with (Rom. 12:1), the yielding up of the will of Jesus Christ to do the will of God.

That this yielding up of His will to the will of God is the better sacrifice of Jesus Christ, is irrefutably proved in Hebrews 10, where the better sacrifice of Jesus is both outlined and defined. In verses 5 to 10, we read these words: “Wherefore when he cometh into the world, he saith, Sacrifice and offering thou wouldst not, mine ears hast thou opened. In whole burnt-offerings, even for sin, thou didst not delight. Then said I, Behold I come, O God, to perform thy will. In the volume of the book it has been written concerning me. Having said above, Sacrifice and offering and whole burnt offerings, even for sin, thou didst not desire nor delight in, (which are offered according to Law), then he said, Behold I come to perform thy will. He takes away the first that he may establish the second. By which will we have been sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus once for all” (free translation).

“The offering of the body of Christ to God was not for crucifixion on Calvary . . . His body was God’s instrument for doing God’s will.”

Jesus Christ made this better sacrifice once for all time, for His own salvation, and for an example to all the members of His body or Church.

This testimony from Hebrews 10, concerning the nature of that sacrifice of Jesus Christ which sanctifies, that is, "doing the will of God," is in agreement with Jesus' own words in John 6:38: "For I came . . . not to do mine own will, but the will of him that sent me." We must remember here in this important connection that sin, condemnation, and moral death were introduced by the first Adam disbelieving God's Word and disobeying His will. So also justification, righteousness and life could only come through the last Adam, Jesus Christ, believing God's Word, and doing His will.

Self-sacrifice, then, is indeed the better sacrifice of Jesus Christ. The doing of God's will necessitates the sacrifice, the yielding up, or surrendering of our own will: "I beseech you therefore, brethren, . . . that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service" (Rom. 12:1). Hence Jesus Christ has been manifested for the removal of sin, by the sacrifice of Himself (Heb. 10:10). He offered or yielded Himself up to God, "holy, harmless, undefiled" (Heb. 7:26, 27). He was a living sacrifice, dead to sin, and it was through the offering of the body of Jesus once for all. Taking the broader viewpoint, we see that every member of the body of Christ must be thus offered.

This offering of the body of Jesus the Christ to God was not for crucifixion on Calvary. The offering up of His body was as the dwelling-place of God for God's will to be done in it and through it. His body was thus used as an instrument for righteousness in doing the will of God, the fruit of this being sanctification and eternal life. (Rom. 6:16—23).

This was a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable, and well pleasing to God. This is the true and better sacrifice of Jesus Christ, and the only possible sacrifice that God desired and could be pleased with. It is the sacrifice of His will in obedience to the will of God, the offering of His body to the service of God, for the glorifying of God as instruments of righteousness, sanctified and holy. The crucifixion of Jesus on Calvary, in the last few hours of His life, was not a sacrifice; it was a murder. This is the plain definite charge made against that people, the elders and the scribes, by the martyr Stephen (Acts 7:52).

Yet this knowledge of their evil and murderous intentions did not move Him from His work of glorifying God on earth. He remained faithful to the truth of God, obedient to the will of God, and fearless in the exposure and denunciation of all the

"Our redemption through Christ is due to His example, to the influence of His holy life upon our lives."

hypocrisy, deceitfulness, unrighteousness, pride, arrogance and injustice which were so very prevalent in His day. In the words of the apostle Paul, Jesus Christ was obedient, even to the death on the cross (Phil. 2:8). We repeat, His crucifixion was a murder. Jesus Christ was a martyr.

There is another matter in this connection which requires special attention and careful consideration, namely, the sufferings of Jesus Christ. The delight and satisfaction of God were not the outcome of beholding the sufferings of Christ as a sacrifice for sinners, and to appease His wrath, or to satisfy the demands of justice, as the sponsors of the efficacy of the scarlet thread declare. The sufferings of the Messiah were not demanded or imposed by God, but were inflicted by man, and it was on account of His faithfulness, obedience and righteousness that He was persecuted and murdered by wicked men.

Christ's sacrifice ended in the Garden of Gethsemane, in perfect obedience to the will of God. This is where Jesus Himself states that He had glorified God on earth and finished the work which God had given Him to do. But the sufferings of the Messiah which had been foretold in the prophetic Scriptures, finished on Calvary, in perfect submission to the evil powers and hatred of men. And it was thus that Jesus told them that this was their hour and the power of darkness (Luke 22:53).

The meaning, virtue, and application of this all-important and great centralizing truth of the better sacrifice of Jesus Christ as being the sacrifice of Himself, and also the nature of that redemption which is in Jesus Christ, so vital and so necessary for our spiritual well-being, but which has been so perverted and misrepresented, must surely be again proclaimed in something like its original purity, simplicity and power.

According to the Scriptural viewpoint, moral purity, Christian virtue, spiritual perfection, is the supreme good to be bestowed by the blood and cross of Christ. O that a voice of power could send this simple yet most sublime truth to the utmost bounds of Christendom! It is a truth mournfully and disastrously obscured. According to the common views, the death of Christ, instead of being the great quickener of heroic virtue, is made the sub-

stitute for it; and many hope to be happy through Christ's dying agony, much more than through the participation of His self-sacrificing life. I doubt whether any error has done so much to rob the potential life-seeker of its purifying power, as these false views of Atonement. The cross of Jesus, when supposed to bless us by some mysterious agency of reconciling God to us, and not by transforming our characters into the spirit and image of our Saviour, becomes our peril and may prove our ruin.

Of one thing I am sure, I cannot receive from the cross of Christ any good so great as that sublime spirit of self-sacrifice, of love to God, and of unbounded charity which the cross so gloriously manifested. And they who seek not this, but, as they imagine, some mystical and mysterious good from Christ's death, are mournfully blinded to the chief end of Christianity. I speak thus strongly, because a great truth, felt deeply, cannot utter itself feebly and tamely.

It will be beneficial to set forth here the essential elements and benefits of the glad tidings as proclaimed by Paul. There is forgiveness of sins and reconciliation to God; crucifixion of the old inner self, and resurrection to newness of life; peace of mind and justification of character; moral and divine oneness with God. There is also a difference between the act of initial forgiveness and the fact of final redemption. It is he that shall continue to the end that shall be saved.

It is stated thus in Eph. 1:7, "In whom we have redemption through his blood [or virtue of his life], the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace."

Christ gave Himself on our behalf that He might redeem us from all iniquity, and "purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works" (Titus 2:14). This redemption which is in Christ Jesus from our lower nature is due to the example, and derived from the influence of His holy life upon our lives. This redemption is from the inward corruption and slavery of the old inner being. Thus redemption is in, and comes through, *vital union with Jesus Christ*. There is not only forgiveness for all past sins by the unmerited goodness of God, but deliverance also has been provided for us from the power and bondage of sin, through a "living active faith in Christ Jesus" (Rom. 3:25, Diaglott).

Through the life and work and sacrifice of Jesus Christ, God has provided for all believers the all-sufficient power, the way and the means to eliminate evil, elevate the mind and emancipate the soul. In Isa. 53:11 it is stated that "When his soul hath brought forth the trespass offering, then shall he see his seed live many days, and the pleasure of

the Lord shall prosper in his hand. Freed from the trouble of his soul he shall see the good and be satisfied; through his knowledge shall my righteous servant bring many to righteousness; while he bears [or forgives] their iniquities." • •

Friendship

Our friends we make not only in our playing,
For idle friendships seldom last for long;
But friends together working, planning, praying
Know finer friendships that are doubly strong:
The friendship of a neighbor with a neighbor,
Is the sort of friendship heaven has understood,
A brotherhood, a sisterhood of labor,
Together working for the common good.

And so we work and plan and pray together,
We make new friends, and firmer grow the old;
We sing a song, and love and hope in prayer,
Each day a link, each link of shining gold.
Some joy perhaps may come from hours of pleasure,
But hours of labor bring the true reward;
And better friendship heaps the fuller measure
Of those who work together with the Lord.

HAVE YOU READ?--

Eleven instructive booklets

HISTORY OF THE MEGIDDO MISSION
THE COMING OF JESUS AND ELIJAH
WHAT MUST WE DO TO BE SAVED?
GOD'S SPIRITUAL CREATION
THE KINGDOM OF GOD
THE GREAT APOSTASY
AFTER DEATH, WHAT?
THE DEVIL AND HELL
THE HOLY SPIRIT
THE SABBATH
THE TRINITY

ALL for \$1.00, Postpaid.

SEND FOR YOUR SET TODAY!

Freedom



through Obedience

GOD MADE men to be free. Only man's own human perversion has limited that freedom. He is bound by his sin, his willfulness, his passion, his pride. He longs to be free, but sees no release from his bondage.

To such a man God calls. He calls him to walk a new life—in submission, surrender, and whole-hearted obedience. Is this the pathway to freedom? Exactly!

But every man has a certain natural freedom. He is free to hearken to the call of God, which is to his own best interest, or he is free to say "no" to God. This is the responsibility of freedom: God gives us the dreadful permission to say "no" even when that decision will result in our own destruction!

The man who answers "yes" to the call of God opens the gate to broader and yet broader fields of freedom. Yet every freedom has one all-encompassing condition: obedience.

The pendulum of a clock is free to swing so long as it is attached; likewise is the man of God free—so long as he obeys. Said Jesus, "Ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free" (John 8:32).



True freedom is not the removal of restraint; this would be license. Freedom is the power to strive and to achieve. Look at it this way: freedom is not that no one prevents you from playing the piano; your freedom lies in being able to play it. God's freedom lies in the ability to be and to do.

To men this freedom is the opportunity to walk in "newness of life." It is not that God formerly prevented us from walking in this way of life, but bound by the shackles of ignorance and sin we could not; we did not know how. Obedience to God's law offers us this freedom.

The Christian faith is a circle with obedience at its center and liberty at its circumference. Strike for the center, and all is in perfect balance; for a man is free to become in the exact degree to which he obeys the call of God to righteousness in life.

*Freedom is not "from" so much as "to"—
Not everyone is free
To play the piano,
To sing,
To love God,
To truly live—
God gives us the freedom "to become!"*



Freedom and obedience always belong together. The difference between a river and a swamp is that the river has borders, the swamp has none. The great life, the free life, the good life, has borders; it is disciplined and restricted, else it would not be free or great or good.

We live in the freedom of obedience. Christ calls us to a freedom by calling us to share His discipline.

By reason of our freedom in the law of Christ, we as Christians oppose that which enslaves: prejudice, which robs one of the ability to judge justly; sensitiveness, which deprives him of the ability to be always composed; deceit, which thwarts his attempts to be truthful; selfishness, which overpowers his concern for the welfare of others; anger, which deprives him of the power to think clearly; conceit, which blinds him to his own failings and shortcomings.

But Christian freedom is not one long string of negatives—it is also the freedom to be! As Christians, we are free for action at the highest level of goodness. We are free to give ourselves—our aspirations, our desires, our affections, our lives—wholly and unreservedly to God. We are free to rejoice in the high calling to which we have been called. We are free to obey, to walk blamelessly before God. We are free, by the power of our example, to call others to the freedom Christ offers. We are free, by virtue of our separation from all that is earthly, to become the sons and daughters of God Almighty—*what greater freedom could we seek!* • •

Timely Topics

PRACTICALLY EVERYTHING these days is becoming commercialized. Even religion. Right now it's a proliferating host of spiritual quacks who have devised a new means of making money—healing. Hour after hour and day after day, from hundreds of religious broadcasting stations across the United States and Canada, echo the fervid appeals of the professors of faith healing.

“My friends,” says the voice, “just follow my instructions, and you will be healed. Kneel down beside your radio. . . . Now put both hands on your radio and pray with me. And the Lord will heal you. . . . Now sit right down and send me a contribution.”

Commercialized Healing

While some cloak their appeals for money in promises of material benefits and prosperity, the suggestion that the listener must remunerate in some measure is always present. In fact, it is sometimes suggested that the Lord may choose to send His healing in direct proportion to the size of the gift. To quote a current evangelist, “The Scriptures say you got to vow and pay, vow and pay, vow and pay. You got to promise God, and you got to keep the promise. If you want God to lift your pain, to make you whole, to bring you joy, you got to have faith. Faith. And faith is to vow and pay.”

And thus from the pockets of gullible thousands, these self-appointed healers are netting millions of dollars each year. Their tools are simple: big emotion-packed “crusades,” and direct mail appeals, as well as the more familiar media, radio broadcasting. By far the most profitable is the mass meeting. A current article in a national magazine reports, for example, a well-known healer who in a single mass meeting asked for and received 25 gifts of \$100 each, then 50 of \$50, and 100 of \$25; and a subsequent collection filled half a dozen metal wastebaskets.

How can they do it? All faith healers, the writer observed, are finished professionals in swaying large audiences. In general their meetings follow a similar pattern. Sensational music rocks and rolls louder and louder and louder, while emotional exhorters condition the audience to receive the “spirit.” Then at the psychological moment the healer ap-

pears, often dressed in iridescent colors, and the wonderful cures begin.

From the simplest to the most successful, faith healers claim a personal experience of divine appointment. “Don’t think this is something I am able to do. I am simply God’s instrument. It is his Holy Spirit working in you that does the healing. It is faith in Him that does the healing.” Or, “Who is healing you? Who’s doing it? It’s Jesus Christ. JEEESUSSSSS!” But one message is always clear: No man can be healed without consulting the instrument.

The majority of faith healers operate independently from any organized denomination, but are nonetheless tax exempt and not required to report income or expenses or any business transactions. A lucrative business, indeed, for the unscrupulous. Why is it allowed to go on? Because according to the law of our land, a man is innocent until proven guilty, and these religious frauds are extremely difficult to prove. Furthermore, under the American guarantee of freedom of worship, a man can believe and teach whatever he wishes and give his money anywhere he wishes. His own conscience must be his guide.

This fraudulent means of money-making is not entirely new. “The heads thereof judge for reward, and the priests thereof teach for hire, and the prophets thereof divine for money: yet will they lean upon the Lord, and say, is not the Lord among us? none evil can come upon us” (Micah 3:11). The prophet Jeremiah foresaw a similar evil work: “From the least to the greatest of them each one traffics in ill-gotten gain; and from prophet to priest each one deals in falsehood. The wound of the daughter of my people they lightly heal, Saying, ‘All is well, all is well,’ when nought is well” (Jer. 6:13, 14, American Version).

But this latter Prophet also spells out the doom of all such: “‘Therefore they shall fall among those who fall, they shall stumble in the hour when I punish them,’ says the Lord” (v. 15).

Prophesying and healing and divining, except under special commission from God, has been strictly forbidden God’s people in every age. To the Israelites the command was first issued: “When thou art come into the land which the Lord thy God giveth thee, thou shalt not learn to do after the abominations of those nations. There shall not be found among you any one that maketh his son or his daughter to pass through the fire, or that useth divination, or an observer of times, or an enchanter, or a witch, or a charmer, or a consulter with familiar spirits, or a wizard, or a necromancer. For all that do these things are an abomination unto the Lord” (Deut. 18:9—11).

Furthermore, the teaching or preaching of the true gospel has never been accompanied by appeals for money. To preach for hire is to invite the condemnation of God Almighty. Ages ago, through His spokesman Isaiah, the God of heaven advertised His spiritual wine and milk as "without money and without price"; and their value today stands unchanged. His products are simply priceless—without price. Says the Prophet, "Ho, every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters, and he that hath no money; come ye, buy and eat; yea, come, buy wine and milk without money and without price" (Isa. 55:1). What modern faith healer has ever directed his efforts especially to "he that hath no money"?

Besides the fraudulent healers are a sincere few who believe they possess some superior powers, and who perform various types of healing. But whatever their capabilities, we may be sure that even these men and women are not performing miracles by the power of God and His Holy Spirit as Jesus and His apostles were able to do.

In our present dispensation, foretelling future events and healing of disease by divine power is an absolute impossibility—because of the absence of divine power in the hands of human men. Since the power of the Holy Spirit was withdrawn during the first century, no one on earth has been able to perform miracles with the power of God. And not until it is restored at the end of this age, at the return of Elijah and Christ, will men do greater works than did Jesus during His earthly ministry.

Commercialized healing has no place in the plan of God. When power for divine healing is restored it will be *free* to all who merit it, not a money-massing fraud to those indisposed to common labor. • •

A Double Obligation

A NOTED newspaper commentator has stated that the decay of moral virtue and the rise of pagan ideas in our world is the greatest threat to women nowadays.

Modern women have a problem far more serious than equal rights on the job or at the ballot box. They have a double obligation: to maintain their own integrity and to inculcate virtue and faith in their children.

From time immemorial women have been the chief custodians of morality, culture and idealism. For these higher values, like music and mathematics, must be taught.

Pagan influence, pagan attire, pagan morals and

pagan values surround us. How blessed are we that the door to a higher realm of thought and action has been opened to us, a door of faith, a door of hope which opens toward the glorious Kingdom of God. He has shown us the way, He has placed before us the immeasurable blessings of the future as incentives—and has even promised one hundred-fold in this life. What more could we ask!

We should stir our minds continually, keeping them impressed with God's wondrous plan of salvation and the wonders of His creation. God did not form the earth to be inhabited forever with unappreciative mortals, overrun with evil and plagued with paganism. His finished work will be a perfect creation, a world filled with glorified beings who have honored *His* standards and adopted *His* values.

Our earth is only one in a mighty and manifold plan which God has been designing from eternity past. "Lift up your eyes on high, and behold who hath created these things, that bringeth out their host by number: he calleth them all by names by the greatness of his might, for that he is strong in power; not one faileth" (Isa. 40:26). When God creates stars, He doesn't make just one or two, but so many that it is beyond the power of man to count them.

Whatever God asks us to do is a small price to pay for the great blessings He has promised. The pay is more than we could ever earn if He required us to work ten thousand years for it. Why shouldn't we exert all our power and push to lift ourselves above the paganism of our day and give to God our whole mind, might and strength! Nothing less will suffice, for

God wants the best. He in the far-off ages
Once claimed the firstling of the flock,
The finest of the wheat;
And still He asks His own with gentlest
pleading
To lay their highest hope and brightest
talents at His feet.
He'll not forget the feeblest service, humblest love;
He only asks that of our stores we give
to Him
The best we have.

Thoughts become a part of you and are reflected in your lives. Discordant thoughts of greed, envy, despair, discouragement, worry, fear, idle gossip, vulgarity, pessimism, gloom of the past should be shut out. Melodious thoughts of faith, encouragement, cheerfulness, gratitude, happiness, good health, friendship, love, charity should permeate your thinking. From the thoughts of today you will be creating new tomorrows.

The Upward Call

Chapter One, Part One



In the brilliant galaxy of the truly great—God's great men—one of the brightest stars bears the name of Paul the Apostle. Nineteen centuries have not dimmed its luster; in an age utterly different in externals, his story still thrills and inspires.

Few great men have had so able a biographer as the "beloved physician," St. Luke; and few biographers have had so illustrious a subject. Only at rare intervals in history does such a combination of men appear.

"The Upward Call" is a study of the closing years of Paul's career, beginning some two years after his arrival at Rome as a prisoner. Luke's account leaves him at this time, his case still undecided. Clement of Rome, who died A. D. 101, completes the record. According to him, Paul was acquitted, was active for a short time in the mission field, was again arrested and brought to Rome, where he was martyred by order of the Emperor Nero, A. D. 67 or 68. This tradition may or may not be true, but there is nothing improbable in it.

Our story begins with an informal gathering in the lobby of one of the Three Taverns, where Paul was met two years before by a delegation of brethren from Rome. The Apostle does not appear, but his impact upon the world of ordinary men is discussed freely.

OUTSIDE, a late winter storm lashed the countryside. In the glare of the lightning, the Via Appia gleamed black, rain-swept and deserted. In the huddle of buildings which marked the crossroads known as The Three Taverns, only a few faint lights shone murkily through the down-pour. It was no night for man or beast to be abroad.

In the common room of Milo's Tavern, there was warmth and good cheer. A fire crackled on the hearth; there was the homelike smell of food and wood smoke. Festoons of drying red peppers, flanked by strings of onions and fat sausages, hung from the time-blackened beams of the ceiling. In the dim light of the bronze lamps the guests were relaxed after a satisfying supper, at peace with the world. It was a cosmopolitan little group of travelers, such as chance might bring together on any night at any wayside inn. Milo, the genial landlord, was bustling about, assuring himself of his guests' comfort, and making introductions.

In the chimney corner, wrapped in a voluminous brown cloak, sat Arbaces, a grizzled sea-captain, bound for Rome after a tour of duty. Opposite him was the ubiquitous army officer, a massive, clean-cut centurion in the livery of the Fifth Legion. His name, he said, was Manlius; he was outward bound, having been transferred to Syria.

At a small table at the left sat a young Roman dandy, introduced as Carbo, a salesman for a pottery firm. According to the host's pleasantry, he had "been everywhere, seen everything, and knows most everything." Carbo, busily padding his expense account, did not deny it.

On the other side of the room, beneath a lamp, a richly dressed, middle-aged Greek gentleman was trying, not too successfully, to read. Eventually he gave it up, and drew up to the fire with the captain and the centurion. His name, he said, was Philistus, of Alexandria; a building contractor seeking business in the wake of Nero's great fire.

The outside door opened, admitting Curio, the youthful porter, with an armload of wood and a report that the storm was increasing in violence. Philistus undertook to explore the possibility of entertainment.

"Well, Captain," he said to Arbaces, "you've probably seen a lot of rough weather in your time. Worse storms than this, probably."

The captain laughed, a short, scornful laugh.

"Well, somewhat. This isn't a beginning. We have them bigger and better at sea."

Carbo looked up from his tablets.

"What was the worst storm you ever weathered, Captain?"

"The worst storm I ever saw was the one we *didn't* weather."

"This sounds like a shipwreck story," was the centurion's hopeful prompting. The captain needed no urging; he rose to the bait in an instant.

"That's what it is, unfortunately. That was two years ago—no, two and a half, to be exact. I was master of the *Silver Trumpet* then."

"The *Silver Trumpet*?" Philistus broke in. "Why, I used to travel in her, twelve, fifteen years ago. Cleonymus was her captain then."

"Yes, I knew him well; a good sailor."

"I heard she was lost, but I never knew the details. So you were her master! Well, well! It's a small world!"

"Don't interrupt the man," chided Manlius pleasantly. "Let's have the story."

"Well, sir, it was one of those trips where everything went wrong—everything. We got a late start, but the owners wanted to get one more cargo through before winter. One thing after another delayed us. We had a full load of wheat and a big list of passengers, and then at Myra—that's a little seaport in Lydia—we got orders to take on a lot of prisoners and their guards, out of Syria to Rome. It really crowded the old tub, believe me—276 people on board, besides cargo.

"Well, the bad luck followed us all the way to Crete, and by that time I knew we'd never make it until spring, so we looked for winter quarters. It's no small matter to be responsible for that many people for three months, and I was really worried. We were at Fair Havens, which wasn't too good a harbor, and the town was dirty and provisions hard to get, so I wanted to get to Phenice if I could."

The contractor and the salesman were wryly sympathetic; both had been to Fair Havens.

"Anyway, I was talking it over with my officers and Julius, the centurion—maybe you know him, Manlius."

"Julius? There are forty thousand men named Julius in the Roman army. What's his last name?"

"Didanus, as I remember. He was of the 24th Legion—an old-timer."

"Julius Didanus? Why, he's an old comrade of mine—we trained together and served together in Gaul. But go on with the story."

"All right, you asked for it—you got me started. Well, as we were debating the question of moving on, up steps one of the prisoners—a Jew named Paul. He was a sort of privileged character; Julius had taken a liking to him and he had the run of the ship."

At the mention of the name, the landlord started visibly. Now he spoke.

"Paul, did you say?"

"Yes, what about it?"

"Nothing. I'll tell my story later. Go ahead."

"This Paul, without being asked, stepped up and told us we'd better stay, or we might lose the ship, and our lives too."

"You liked that, I suppose?" was Carbo's dry comment.

"Frankly, I didn't. I thought, Who are you, you dryland sailor, trying to tell me how to run my ship? But to get ahead of my story, before we were through I was very glad to have his help. *There* was a man.

"Well, we didn't listen to him. When we got a favorable wind we tried to crawl up the coast to Phenice, when with no warning at all the wind swung round and a roaring northeaster drove us out to sea. I've seen storms and I've seen storms, but never before nor since did I see a storm that lasted for fifteen days without a break."

"Did you know where you were?" asked Philistus.

"No-o-o! After two days we were hopelessly lost, and lucky to be right side up. No sun, no stars, nothing but rain and wind that would blow the hair off your head."

He ran his hand over his bald pate, then stared in pained surprise at the guffaw which arose. A mocking, "So-o-o!" from Carbo was rewarded with a black look, as the speaker continued.

"We were on watch all the time, sleeping when we couldn't help it and eating what we could grab—raw wheat mostly. Nearly everybody was seasick—oh dear, oh dear, what a mess! We had given up hope and were just working the ship from force of habit. But the coolest man on board—and the only cheerful one—was that Jew, Paul."

Curio leaned on his broom. "Did he say, I told you so?"

"Yes, he did. And he had a right to. But he told us to cheer up, because the God he served had told him that we would all be saved, although the ship would be lost. Somehow that made us feel a lot better. It didn't make sense, coming from a prisoner, but—the old story—a drowning man catches at a straw.

"Well, one night shortly after he told us that, we heard breakers, so we anchored until morning. We were on a strange coast, but there was a sheltered

bay just ahead. We almost made it, too, but unfortunately there was a bar we couldn't see, and we couldn't change our minds once we started. We piled up, and the old *Silver Trumpet* went to pieces in less than an hour."

"So this Paul was right about the ship." Milo's tone was that of a man impressed but not at all surprised.

"He was, and also about our lives being saved. We didn't lose a man. We were wet and cold and full of salt water, but we were all alive. But the remarkable part of the whole thing was how this Paul came to the top in the emergency. Before it was over he was giving orders to me, and to Julius, and the soldiers; in fact, he was the captain: and I was just as well pleased. I couldn't have done as well. If not for him, I probably wouldn't be alive today."

The tale was ended; the captain sat down. Manlius nodded understandingly.

"Well, you know the old saying—you can't keep a good man down. I've seen it a thousand times—it's the emergencies that separate the men from the boys."

"He was a man, all right. He's got something most men don't have. He's got judgment; he's got wisdom; he's got leadership. You can't help liking him, and admiring him, and looking up to him. At least I couldn't."

"What was he in for?" Curio asked.

"In?"

"Yes, in prison."

"Oh! why, some religious trouble in Jerusalem—a riot or something, and the leaders of the Jews preferred charges against him. He figured he couldn't get a fair trial there, so he appealed to Caesar."

"He must have been a citizen, then," Philistus observed.

"He was—born free."

"I thought you said he was a Jew," Carbo objected.

"That's right—born a high-caste Jew and a leader among them, but now he's become a leader of the Christians. That's why the Jews turned against him."

The salesman's voice was heavy with cynical scorn.

"Christians! Bah! that little insignificant tribe of fanatics and slaves and laborers. Who ever heard of them?"

"I have," the captain shot back. "Paul is no slave. And he is well educated. I don't know too much about his religion; he used to talk it to us a good deal, but it was mostly over my old thick head. But I know a good man when I see one, and he's a good

man. He's founded Christian churches all over Asia and Greece, and they are growing. They're even in Rome—a lot of them."

"What gods does he worship?" asked Philistus.

"He says there is only one God—the same God the Jews claim to believe in, but he's got a different slant. The Jews are pretty good people, too—some of them—but they don't know what they want or where they're going. Paul knows. Yes sir, he can tell you all about it. And pretty soon you begin to believe him; it all sounds so reasonable."

"Ah-h nonsense!" sneered Carbo. "All religions are alike. Maybe the gods exist, maybe not. But one thing is sure, the priests exist and they make a good thing out of it. They're all in it for the money—they'll take it from anybody. This Paul—he's probably a good sort of man, as you say—a good salesman. He could probably outsell me. But he's no different from any other priest. Religion is his racket, just as pottery is mine."

Curio, who thoroughly enjoyed feuding with this "city slicker," picked up the challenge. "You're sure about that, are you?"

"Why, certainly! I don't believe—"

"You don't believe in nothin', do you?"

"Not very much—nothing but what I see, and not all of that. I've been around, and I've learned to be on my guard."

"Well, my young friend," said the captain, "if you'd seen what I have you'd *have* to believe some things."

"What do you mean, Captain?" Philistus asked.

"Well, to get back to the wreck of the *Silver Trumpet*—when we got ashore we found we were on Malta. I'd been there, of course, but on the other side of the island. The natives helped us ashore and built a big fire to dry us out. Paul was picking up sticks to help, when a deadly viper bit him on the hand. The people all expected to see him turn black in the face and fall down dead, but he just shook the snake off into the fire and went on about his business, as though it was one of Milo's pet mosquitoes."

"So, my skeptical friend, what would you have said to that?"

"Garter snake, probably." Carbo was unruffled; he too was enjoying this.

"No such thing"—with annoyance. "I know a viper when I see one. We had them by the hundreds where I was born and raised. Then the next day we went to call on the governor of the island—matter of courtesy and business, you know—and Paul went along, naturally. The governor's father was very sick—at the point of death. Paul went in to him and prayed and laid his hands on him, and the old gen-

(Continued on page 26)

UNDERSTANDING THE BIBLE

"Study to shew thyself approved unto God."

The Hell of the Bible

LAST MONTH we investigated the original words translated "hell" in the Bible and studied their usages. We found Sheol, Hades and Gehenna to have meanings far less horrific than the gaping flames of theology's hell. In fact, their principal meanings are simply of death, destruction, annihilation. We found the punishment of the wicked to be eternal death.

Now we shall continue our study of the punishment of the wicked and conclude with a quick look at other concepts of hell, concepts foreign to the Bible but upheld by many nominal believers. We will follow our outline:

- III. The Punishment of the Wicked
 - C. The Goodness of God
 - D. The Mortal Nature of Man
- IV. Purgatory and Limbo
 - A. Purgatory—Is It Biblical?
 - B. Limbo—Is It Biblical?
- V. Concepts of Hell
 - A. Influence From Outside the Bible

Men may dream and speculate and guess; but the Word of God still stands immutable: "The soul that sinneth, it shall die"—not burn or suffer forever.

III. THE PUNISHMENT OF THE WICKED

C. The Goodness of God

To the average person there is no doctrine so revolting as the doctrine of hell-fire, eternal torment or everlasting punishment for the wicked. And of all the false doctrines extant in the world today there is none that so dishonors the name of God as this one. That a God of infinite mercy, justice and love would or could torture a human being knowingly for even an hour would be unthinkable. Yet even in our enlightened twentieth century, the doctrine persists that the ultimate destiny of those who reject God is an eternity of misery. Can this be possible? Again we will go to the Bible for our answer.

1. **God is a God of goodness.** "Oh how great is

thy goodness, which thou hast laid up for them that fear thee," declared the Psalmist; "the earth is full of the goodness of the Lord" (31:19; 33:5). **Any form of torment or torture could not be imagined as proceeding from a God of goodness.**

Paul reminds us of God's goodness and also of His severity: "Behold therefore the goodness and severity of God: on them which fell, severity; but toward thee, goodness, if thou continue in his goodness: otherwise thou also shalt be cut off" (Rom. 11:22). **Those who do not merit His goodness will be cut off, not burned in a fire.**

We are also told by Paul that **God's goodness, not the threat of eternal torment, leads men to repentance:** "Or despisest thou the riches of his goodness and forbearance and longsuffering; not knowing that the goodness of God leadeth thee to repentance?" (Rom. 2:4).

2. **God is a God of mercy and justice.** The Psalmist said: "For thou, Lord, art good, and ready to forgive; and plenteous in mercy unto all them that call upon thee" (Ps. 86:5). How could we possibly believe He would cause physical suffering throughout an endless eternity for what evil a man could do during this life? "Justice and judgment are the habitation of thy throne: mercy and truth shall go before thy face" (Ps. 89:14). "The judgments of the Lord are true and righteous altogether" (Ps. 19:9). **A God of justice, mercy and truth, who renders righteous judgments would not sentence even the worst sinner to a flaming inferno.**

3. **God is a God of love.** His compassion, His mercy, His forgiveness, His long-suffering toward His earthly children are all summed up in the term "love." (See I John 4:8—16; Ps. 86:15; 103:10—18; 111:4; 145:8.) **Such a God would not condemn even the most wicked to eternal torture.** The punishment of the wicked will be limited to cutting off, destroying eternally all who are judged unworthy of eternal life.

D. The Mortal Nature of Man

The doctrine that a man goes to his reward in either heaven or hell at death is based upon the false premise that man possesses an immortal soul

that must be accommodated eternally in either bliss or misery. But from the Bible we learn that man is mortal, subject to death, and possesses no separate soul or spirit that is immortal, hence there is no possibility of reward or punishment at death.

The subject of **"The Nature of Man"** has been discussed in detail in previous issues of the MEGIDDO MESSAGE, but we will review some of the proof texts on man's nature.

1. **Man does not possess a soul, HE IS A SOUL. The soul is the whole living person.** "Seventy souls" went down into Egypt with the patriarch Jacob (Ex. 1:5); and souls die: "The soul that sinneth, it shall die" (Ezek. 18:4). The words "soul" and "spirit" are not once described as undying, immortal, deathless, or in any way everlasting, throughout the Scriptures.

2. **The state of the dead.** It is plainly stated in the Bible that "the dead know not anything" (Eccl. 9:5). This precludes any possibility of torment in hell after death. Knowledgeable suffering would have to be limited to a man's life because "he breathes his last breath, . . . and in that same hour all his thinking ends" (Ps. 146:4, NEB).

IV. PURGATORY AND LIMBO

Belief in **purgatory and limbo** is limited to the Roman Catholic faith, but because Catholicism is embraced by more than half of the estimated Christian population of the world, we will include a brief discussion of these terms. Our concern is whether or not the doctrine is Biblical. "Prove all things" was the command of the apostle Paul, and it is the basis of all true religion. We must be able to prove what we believe by the Bible.

A. Purgatory—Is it Biblical?

Purgatory is defined as "A place or state in which some souls are detained for a time after death before entering heaven, which literally means a place of cleansing." It is further defined as a state of temporary punishment for those who died without having fully paid the satisfaction due for past forgiven sins. According to the **Catholic Encyclopedia**, souls in purgatory are subject to "punishment and suffering," but "these souls are sure of their salvation."

The existence of Purgatory was defined at the Council of Florence (1438—1445) as follows: "The souls are cleansed by purgatorial pains after death and in order that they may be rescued from these pains they are benefited by the suffrages of the living faithful, namely: the sacrifice of the mass, prayers, alms and other works of piety."

The **Catholic Encyclopedia** further states:

"Whether purgatory is a state or a place is a disputed question among theologians. The idea of Purgatory is certainly a reasonable one. It would seem quite unfitting for souls still defiled by even the slightest sin to appear before God. . . . Scripture gives indications if not strong proof of the existence of Purgatory."

Does Scripture give proof or even any indication of such a place as Purgatory? Have we any reason to believe that satisfaction can be made for sin after death? Is such a doctrine reasonable?

The doctrine of Purgatory is neither reasonable nor Scriptural. We will go to the Bible itself for proof.

1. **The Bible does not teach it.** The "proof" referred to in the above quotation is found in II Machabees 12:46 (an Apocryphal book) and Matt. 12:32 in the common version. Since the Apocryphal books are admitted to be of doubtful origin and are no part of the Canon of Scripture, we cannot accept a quotation from it as proof. Matthew 12:32 reads: "And whosoever speaketh a word against the Son of man, it shall be forgiven him: but whosoever speaketh against the Holy Spirit, it shall not be forgiven him, neither in this world, neither in the world to come." In other words, they say, it shall be forgiven **between** this world and the world to come—in Purgatory. But is not this conjecture **added** to Jesus' words?

Nowhere in the Scriptures do we find any suggestion of the forgiveness of sins after death and we cannot believe it was Jesus' intent to teach it. Jesus was making the point that all sins were forgivable except the sin against the Holy Spirit. By saying "neither in this world, neither in the world to come," He was saying that the sin against the Holy Spirit was unpardonable; it could not be forgiven, then or ever. A footnote on the verse in the New Catholic Bible is interesting: ". . . it is morally impossible that he should ever meet the conditions for absolution." This approach would not appear to support the doctrine of Purgatory.

2. **It is based upon the false doctrine of the "immortal soul."** Without the foundation of the "immortal soul" the theory of Purgatory falls of its own weight. In previous lessons we have proved the doctrine of the "immortal soul" to be the word of man and not the Word of God (See **The Nature of Man** series). When a man dies, "his breath goeth forth, he returneth to his earth; in that very day his thoughts perish" (Ps. 146:4). How could he ask or receive forgiveness? Again, "in death there is no remembrance of thee: in the grave who shall give thee thanks?" (Ps. 6:5). Any change after death is impossible. It is a Bible principle that "where the tree falleth, there it shall be" (Eccl. 11:3).

3. **At death, man goes to the grave.** The Bible

is explicit on this point. **There is no intermediate state:** "...for there is no work, nor device, nor knowledge, nor wisdom, **in the grave, whither thou goest**" (Eccl. 9:10). At death **the whole man goes to the grave.** Nothing in the Scriptures indicates otherwise. Job said, "If I wait, **the grave is mine house**" (17:13). He did not expect to stop anywhere short of the grave, nor did he expect to go to heaven and meet the Lord at death. Job's words are too plain to be misunderstood; he desired that his words be "graven with an iron pen and lead in the rock for ever." The point he was impressing was that he would someday meet his Redeemer—on the earth, (Job 19:23—27). All shall "sleep in the dust of the earth" (Dan. 12:2) until the resurrection and Judgment.

4. The doctrine of purgatory is contrary to plain Bible teaching. We cannot interpret one single verse in the Scriptures in a way that would be contrary to other plain Bible teachings, for we believe the Bible to be without contradiction. Neither can we accept as truth a doctrine that is based wholly on assumption. There is nothing in the Scriptures to indicate that either a state or a place of purgatory exists. A man's status is to be determined at the Judgment, not at death. Both righteous and wicked will sleep until they stand at the Judgment. (See Matt. 25:32—34; II Cor. 5:10; Rom. 14:10.)

B. Limbo—Is it Biblical?

Limbo is a much-debated question even among those who profess to believe in the doctrine. The dictionary defines limbo as "A region on the edge of hell for the souls of the righteous who died before the coming of Christ, and those of infants who die before baptism." Like purgatory, it is described as an intermediate state, neither heaven nor hell, but nevertheless an eternal state.

Over the centuries the doctrine of Limbo has undergone a noticeable evolution, and today the question is far from settled. Volumes have been written on the subject revealing a wide range of opinions concerning the salvation of infants. Limbo is admitted to be "more the construction of theologians than the working of divine providence," yet it remains a tenet of the Catholic Church.

According to the modern concept of Limbo, an unbaptized child at death is judged worthy of neither heaven nor hell. Instead, he is consigned to some middle ground where he knows neither the joys of heaven nor the torments of hell, but has a measure of happiness in keeping with his mental development. The Limbo theory assumes that a child is born with original sin in his soul. He is a sinner, not by choice, but by heritage; and because of this stain of sin he cannot enter heaven. Limbo is pictured as

a necessary exile, a separation from God because of the inherited sin.

Limbo is described as "both a beautiful and consoling conception." Being "beautiful and consoling" does not make it Biblical. (No Scriptural proof is offered.) The dispute over limbo could be quickly solved by going to the Bible. There is considerable proof that such a region could not exist.

1. Limbo presupposes the existence of "original sin." There is no such thing as "original sin." Every man is condemned for his own sin: "His own iniquities shall take the wicked himself, and he shall be holden with the cords of his sins" (Prov. 5:22). A child does not inherit the sin of a parent or grandparent or remote ancestor. "The fathers shall not be put to death for the children, neither shall the children be put to death for the fathers: every man shall be put to death for his own sin" (Deut. 24:16). This was the law in ancient Israel, and the principle still stands. "The son shall not bear the iniquity of the father, neither shall the father bear the iniquity of the son: the righteousness of the righteous shall be upon him, and the wickedness of the wicked shall be upon him" (Ezek. 18:20).

2. Limbo is based on the immortal soul theory. Limbo, like purgatory, assumes the existence of an "immortal soul." Any doctrine without Biblical support is worthless. The theory of the "immortal soul" is a product of Greek thought and not the Word of God. Nothing can be found in the Scriptures to support it. (Refer to the series on **The Nature of Man.**) There is nothing in the Bible to substantiate the theory of Limbo.

A living soul is a living person; a dead soul is a dead person. Souls or people are not preserved eternally, but go to the grave at death regardless of age. Whether or not they are worthy of eternal life is dependent upon the decision of the Judge at the resurrection. The reward will be either eternal life or eternal death with no intermediate state. A child who dies before reaching the age of understanding is not amenable to Judgment and not subject to either reward or punishment.

V. CONCEPTS OF HELL

The idea of hell, like many other doctrines of the Roman Church, has undergone a gradual transition over the centuries. Hell as a place of torment or punishment was unknown to the Jews in Old Testament times. To them, Sheol was simply the abode of the dead, the grave, as its usage in the Scriptures would indicate. Neither is there any indication that the Apostolic Church believed or taught such a doctrine. As shown in previous lessons, Jesus' use of Gehenna was meant to convey the thought of de-

struction, extermination or annihilation. An analysis of His teachings reveals no thought of punishment or torment. Gehenna was symbolic of the "rubbish heap of the universe to which men consign themselves when they reject God."

The belief in hell as a place of punishment came about largely because of the "immortal soul" concept. This belief was adopted from the pagans and finds no place in the Scriptures. But believing the soul to be immortal necessitated a doctrine to provide some form of punishment for the souls of the wicked after death. Since all souls went to be with God immediately after death, they reasoned that without an eternal place of punishment, the soul of the wicked person would fare as well at death as the soul of the righteous. The sinner would have triumphed, enjoying what he wanted of this world and obtaining the world to come.

A. Influence From Outside the Bible

The concept of **Sheol**, or hell as a place of punishment and torment has come about largely from outside influence. There is nothing in the Old Testament to indicate that the Jews thought of Sheol, often translated "hell," as anything but the grave, the place of the dead.

1. Greek influence. Greek mythology and philosophy influenced the doctrine. The Greeks had definite ideas about the hereafter. Plato, a Greek philosopher of the fourth century before Christ, had much to do with the idea of the "immortal soul," explaining the theory in great detail. The doctrine was entirely of pagan origin.

At this same period in history, mythology was the religion of the Greeks. These myths were the product of an overworked imagination. The Greeks worshiped many gods, but not the true God. To their gods they attributed much. Life and death, the movement of earth, the rain, the wind, the sun that moved across the sky, the moon and the stars—everything that lived or moved was ascribed to the gods.

One of these gods was **Hades**, the god of the underworld kingdom, a realm of darkness in some imaginary region under the earth. According to the myth, Hades supervised the trial and punishment of the wicked souls after death. The name Hades came to be applied to the region itself, which led to the use of the term in the Greek translations of the Scriptures.

Hades was generally thought of as a place where the souls of all the dead led a shadowy existence. From this beginning, the idea gradually developed of a paradise for good souls, and Tartarus (discussed earlier in this series), a deep pit beneath Hades, where the souls of the wicked were punished.

Although generally thought of as a place of heat and flames, some myths describe it as cold and dark.

As the Jews came in contact with the Greeks after the Babylonian exile, they gradually adopted Greek thought concerning the hereafter and the immortal soul, but it was after the sixth century A. D. that the doctrine of everlasting punishment came into prominence. It was not accepted as a tenet of the church before this time.

2. Literary influence. Poets, artists and authors have had a part in formulating the doctrine and establishing the idea of a blazing inferno. Medieval artists pictured hapless victims surrounded by beasts and flames. **Dante**, the well-known Italian poet of the Middle Ages, saw hell as a vast crater that pierced the center of the earth. **Milton**, the famous poet of the fifteenth century did much to influence the conception of hell in the minds of people through his well-known work, **Paradise Lost**. His vivid portrayal in words was so striking that it has endured the test of time. According to one authority, its influence on English thought has been surpassed only by the Bible. (In the matter of establishing the doctrine of the immortal soul, it has surpassed the Bible, since the Bible does not support the theory.)

Thus hell, as a place of flames and torment, became firmly fixed in the minds of many, not because the Scriptures taught it, but because it had been received by tradition.

To be a messenger you must know the message.

TEST YOURSELF

1. What will be the punishment of all who do not merit God's eternal blessing?
2. How can we know God is a God of goodness, and that as such He will not subject men to eternal misery?
3. Prove that God is a God of mercy, also of justice and love.
4. Why must we believe in the unscriptural doctrine of the immortal soul if we accept the doctrine of hell?
5. Explain Matthew 12:32. Why does this verse **not** support the theory of Purgatory?
6. Where does man go after death?
7. In what way does the belief in Limbo conflict with the teaching of the Bible concerning inherited sin?
8. Discuss briefly the influence of Greek mythology on the modern concept of hell.

*Reprints of these studies are available
upon request.*

THE SABBATH

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

The Two Laws Contrasted

WHAT WERE the essential differences between the higher, eternal law of God and the national, temporary law of Moses?

First: The law of Moses was given only to Israel; the "law of faith" applies to all who place themselves under it, whether Jew or Gentile. The decision is voluntary for each individual. The law of Moses was given to the children of Israel, to be obeyed "throughout their generations"; and it was a "sign between me and the children of Israel for ever" (Ex. 31:12—17). Moses himself called it a "national" law: "And what nation is there so great, that hath statutes and judgments so righteous as all this law, which I set before you this day?" (Deut. 4:8).

Second: The law of Moses had only a temporal purpose: to insure temporal prosperity and protect temporal life. The law of faith offers *eternal* rewards. We read of the law of Moses: "And the Lord commanded me at that time to teach you statutes and judgments, that ye might do them in the land whither ye go over to possess it" (Deut. 4:14). Their temporal prosperity depended on their obedience to that civil law: "Only be thou strong and very courageous, that thou mayest observe to do according to all the law, which Moses my servant commanded thee: turn not from it to the right hand or to the left, that thou mayest prosper whithersoever thou goest. . . for then thou shalt make thy way prosperous, and then thou shalt have good success" (Joshua 1:7, 8). Deuteronomy 28 lists the blessings which the nation of Israel would enjoy if they obeyed the law of Moses. "The man that doeth them shall live in them" (Gal. 3:12)—the law would benefit this present life.

Third: The law of Moses was given for a limited period of time; the law of God—"Walk before me and be thou perfect"—is in force throughout the day of salvation. We read of the law of Moses: "It was added because of transgressions, till the seed should come to whom the promise was made"—until the seed should come (Gal. 3:19), "to thy seed, which is Christ" (v. 16). Paul said plainly: "Christ is the end of the law" (Rom. 10:4).

Fourth: The law of Moses governed only outward conduct; the superior law of God reaches to the thoughts and intents of the heart. We read in Heb. 4:12 of the power of God's higher law: "For the word of God is quick, and powerful, and sharper than any twoedged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discernor of the thoughts and intents of the heart."

Paul also told of its far-reaching powers: "Casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ" (II Cor. 10:4, 5). Jesus condemned "evil thoughts"—a transgression which the law of Moses would never denounce.

Jesus' own amplifications of the law of Moses in Matthew 5 point out its limitations. Jesus said that the man who "lusteth in his heart" is an adulterer; and the man who is angry with his brother is a murderer. The person who refrains from an evil act only for lack of opportunity or for fear of the penalty of the law stands as guilty under the law of God as though he had openly broken the law; the law of Moses had no such power.

Fifth: The law of Moses could not take away sin (Heb. 10:1—4). The law of faith, the higher law of God, makes one "pure in heart," (Matt. 5:8), frees him from the "sting of sin," and "cleanses" him

“from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit” (II Cor. 7:1), when it is applied. And this prepares a man to receive “glory and honour and immortality, eternal life” (Rom. 2:7), which the law of Moses could never do. “For the law made nothing perfect, but the bringing in of a better hope did; by the which we draw nigh unto God” (Heb. 7:19).

The law of faith is vastly superior—both in its applications and in its effects.

The Law from Sinai Abolished

THE LAW of Moses had its limitations—God had not planned that it should be invincible or eternal. Seventh-day keepers proclaim that God’s law [meaning the Sinaitic code] is unchangeable. But the author of Hebrews contradicts them boldly, stating “that there is made of necessity a change also of the law” (Heb. 7:12.) There came “a *change* of the law”—the law of Moses was not a permanent law. When the new covenant was confirmed in Christ, He took “away the first that he [might] establish the second” (Heb. 10:9). He took away the old, which was written on the “tables of stone,” that He might write the new in the fleshly tables of the heart.

For 2500 years God governed men solely by His eternal law of faith and obedience. Then came the time when He organized a nation and gave them an additional law, the law of Moses. This lasted for another 1500 years. But when Christ came, the Jewish nation was rejected and soon after dispersed; their national law was overthrown, and the law ended; having served its purpose, it passed away.

Christians today are not under the Aaronic priesthood nor the Jewish law (Heb. 7:11, 12); we are under the priesthood of Melchisedec (Heb. 7:14—19) as was Abraham (Gen. 14:18—20). “But now hath he obtained a more excellent ministry, by how much also he is the mediator of a better covenant [Christ is our mediator], which was established upon better promises” (Heb. 8:6).

Abraham never knew the law of Sinai (Gal. 3:17), but he had the “better promises” and walked by the higher law which governed holy men of old. The Lord commended Abraham’s obedience: “Because that Abraham obeyed my voice, and kept my charge, my commandments, my statutes, and my laws” (Gen. 26:5). In just what form this higher law was known to the patriarchs we are not told; to say that it was in the exact words of the Decalog is to affirm what we cannot prove. But God’s supreme law was known to Adam and to the patriarchs; and today, the Jewish law being removed, we come

under the same law by which Enoch and Noah “walked with God.”

A Time Limit on the Law

Paul tells us that the law was given for a specific purpose and for a limited time: Until the seed should come. We read: “Wherefore then serveth the law? It was added because of transgressions, till the seed should come to whom the promise was made” (Gal. 3:16, 19)—that is, until Christ should come.

Paul says further: “But before faith came, we were kept under the law, shut up unto the faith which should afterwards be revealed. Wherefore the law was our schoolmaster to bring us unto Christ, that we might be justified by faith. But after that faith is come, we are no longer under a schoolmaster” (Gal. 3:21—25). For how long was the law added? “The law was our schoolmaster to bring us *unto Christ*. . . . But after that faith is come, we are *no longer* under a schoolmaster.” Many of the Jews of Jesus’ own day stumbled at this. They claimed to teach the Mosaic law and rejected Christ. But as Jesus told them, they did not believe all that Moses taught. “For had ye believed Moses, ye would have believed me: for he wrote of me” (John 5:46).

(Continued next issue)

Without Vision

Pity the man who never sees
Beyond his own small boundaries,

Who never sees the morning sun
Lift the veil that night has spun

Or ever finds a lonely star
Hiding where cloud-mountains are.

Sightless as one whose eyes are sealed,
He does not look across the field

To where a winding river spills
Its liquid silver through the hills.

The robins on his cherry limb
Are but the orchard thieves to him.

Blind as the worm beneath his sod,
He never sees the smile of God.

Words can make a deeper scar than silence can ever heal.

Speak little and well if you would be esteemed as a man of merit.

IN THESE days of strife and violence, of indecency and immorality, when vice is flaunted and virtue nearly extinct, we need to keep ourselves aroused, awake, alert. We need to "*keep the faith*...."

These words, phrased originally by Adam Clayton Powell, present a stirring challenge to each of us, a rallying cry to hold on, however long the hour. Though all around grow cold and those who are nearest forsake, *we must keep the faith*.

Recent summers have been seasons of tragic disorders and violence in our nation. They have been summers not soon to be forgotten. The cities hit by riots and disorder show the ugly scars of gutted buildings and burned-out homes, and the predictions are that before these pockmarks are removed, there will be additional scars marring the face of our land. Our nation is pervaded by a sense of uneasiness and fear which is disquieting.

In times like these, when men's hearts are failing them for fear and wonder of what is coming on the earth, in these times of conflict and distress among nations, when men lift their voices in strife and division, in dismay and perplexity, we need to remind ourselves often to "*keep the faith*." Is the voice of man the only voice speaking today? Is there not a word from the Lord?

Yes, there *is* a word from the Lord, delivered many years ago for the benefit of the few who would be living in the climactic hours of the age. In Matthew 24 Jesus was answering those questions which have concerned men through the ages. What would be the signs of the close of the age? How would things be in those days?

The discourse Jesus gave them

KEEP THE FAITH



was graphic and frightening. The language is vivid. We are moved by the intensity of Jesus' words. "And because wickedness is multiplied, most men's love will grow cold" (Matt. 24:12, RSV).

What did Jesus mean? What did He intend? "Because wickedness is multiplied, most men's love will grow cold." What did it mean to those about Him who were the first to hear? What meaning does it have for *us*? Is there a word in this text from the Lord spoken directly to us?

Commentators on this text suggest that even then among some of the followers of Jesus, love between fellow-believers had begun to grow cold, and goodwill had evaporated under the stress and strain of the conflict with a hostile age.

And do we not observe the same in our day, that, as wickedness increases and as things get worse, many lose the goodwill

and love they once had? Jesus made the observation in His day, and we make the observation in our day.

Love, we have been taught, "bears all things, believes all things, endures all things" (I Cor. 13:7). It is "slow to lose patience—it looks for a way of being constructive. It is not possessive: it is neither anxious to impress nor does it cherish inflated ideas of its own importance. Love has good manners and does not pursue selfish advantage. It is not touchy. It does not keep account of evil or gloat over the wickedness of other people. On the contrary, it is glad with all good men when truth prevails. Love knows no limit to its endurance, no end to its trust, no fading of its hope; it can outlast anything. It is, in fact, the one thing that still stands when all else has fallen" (I Cor. 13:4—8, Phillips Bible).

Love never fails. Yet, Jesus speaks of love growing cold as wickedness is multiplied; He says that *most* (not some) men's love will grow cold—is ours?

Matthew 24 is not the only New Testament report of the diminishing of love among believers. Christ's letter to the church in Ephesus (Rev. 2:1—7) commends the church for their patient endurance and steadfastness in belief, but charges "that you have abandoned the love you had at first." Without this glowing love, belief and patient endurance are of no significance.

What application has this text for us?

Have any of us allowed the warm love which once stirred us, to yield to a cold indifference or—even to icy disapproval?

Why did love grow cold in Jesus' day? Why did the church in Ephesus abandon the love they had at first? Had some

started out with Christ not knowing the demands of the pilgrimage? Had some accepted His teachings and confused *free* with *easy*?

We cannot say with certainty what caused love to grow cold during those early years of Christianity. We might not be much more successful in isolating the conditions which have made for a similar reaction in our day, from a worldly point of view.

But to determine the cause is not our purpose. Our concern is to prevent the result in our own lives. How do *we* keep the faith? How do we keep *our* love warm, glowing, vibrant, spiritual?

It has been pointed out that love, under the stress of disorder and violence, grows cold if it is not rooted and grounded in mature, genuine faith. A love that cannot face the harsh realities of life may be only a surface love, without depth and stability. The same is true in our spiritual life. When Jesus called men to come after Him, He always made it absolutely clear what the demands of discipleship would be; never did He give the impression that to follow Him would be easy or even popular. When He calls us to love, He does not shield us from its exacting *demands*.

A current writer has observed that the love of Christ is not based on conditions. That is, our love for others (for Negroes or whites or young or old) should hinge upon their behavior as we feel they ought to act, and not upon tradition or prejudice. A love that is withdrawn when the going is rough and unpopular is not the love of Christ. A love that reacts to hatred and bitterness and violence with icy resentment and a narrowing of the circle of love is not the love of God. A love that freezes in the conflict is not of the Father.

The love of the Christian is

finely delineated by trying circumstances. The crucible of strife will bring out the best in men of love and faith. Among shallow disciples, sunshine-followers, and summertime-believers, such love as they possess will wilt before the crisis of suffering and trial.

What is the source of this love? How shall we sustain and feed our love through the "long, hot summer"? This is the question which many people today are asking. And the answer—?

First, we must "keep the faith" and maintain the presence of virtue in our daily lives. We can do this by either recovering a devotional life, if we have neglected it, or by accenting the devotional life we now follow. Faith, prayer, meditation, diligent devotion to principle in every act and impulse—these are indispensable elements of endurance. And much more desperately does the active Christian need these qualities!

The reflective life is prerequisite to the active life. That is, a mind fixed on the law of God and a heart with its affections on things above is necessary before we can know the full benefits of an active, God-directed life. To "keep the faith" when others are abandoning theirs, to hold a steady course when every wind is threatening, it is necessary to *know* the God in whom we believe; it is necessary to pray without ceasing, to order our conversation aright, and to worship privately and faithfully, as well as to gather at the stated hours of worship. Whenever we turn from these spiritual exercises, we are the weaker and more fragile for it.

Second, if we are to keep our love warm, we must be engaged in specific action and service. We must be involved in a ministry of selfless service, abhorring that which is evil, cleaving to

that which is good. This is not to let our love run free, but to harness it; or rather, to be harnessed by Christ's love, in specific, direct, responsible, and determined action.

We do not abandon true love for God under the stress and strain of hard days. Love that grows cold is not active, absorbed, engaged love. Love that is exercised regularly is not as susceptible to growing cold as is an unexercised, weak flaccid love.

We do not know what the summer holds. With it may come the heat of battle and the fire of trial. When the cold winds of autumn return, my love may have grown cold, and your love may have grown cold. However, no matter how ugly the summer, my love need *not* grow cold, and your love need *not* grow cold.

If we are determined to win in this conflict, our love is not changed by the length or the heat of the summer. Whatever others may choose to do, *we can* keep the faith.

Yes, "keep the faith." What a rallying cry! "Because wickedness is multiplied, most men's love will grow cold." But it is our sacred duty to "keep the faith."

Keep the love we had at the first.

Keep the faith in which we have been established, the faith once delivered to the saints.

Keep the love we have for God and His truth.

Love is kept when our hearts throb with the anticipation of the glory to be revealed. Love is kept when we delight in the law of God above every earthly glory. Love is kept only when it is spent, released, given away. Love is kept when the mind of God directs the man.

Love is kept when we "keep the faith."

Adapted in part from *Pulpit Digest*, June 1968, "Keep the Faith, Baby!" ● ●

MEGIDDO MESSAGE.

What Is Your

Listening Level?

A GOOD question these days, when there are so many sounds to hear and so many to shut out. Do we have a listening skill that has been honed to a very fine edge, or do we need to spend more time developing this ability?

Attentive listening requires practice. It has been said that we talk somewhere between 120 and 155 words a minute, but our minds process between 420 and 800 words per minute. This means that between the speaker's words and the listener's speedier mental activity there is a gap which gives our minds time to dart off into dozens of unrelated subjects *right while we are listening!*

The result: We are afflicted with poor retention. For instance, you listen to a thought-provoking sermon or address and are impressed by the speaker's thoughts. Hours later you try to recall what was said, and you cannot. You blame your poor memory, but more than likely it is your poor listening level. How many unrelated thoughts darted through your mind while you were "listening"? Had there been fewer of these, don't you think you might have *remembered* more?

Complete mind control is the key to effective listening—and remembering.

There is a good lesson in the story of the lady who was given a hair dryer. The appliance was delivered to her home, and the store owner explained carefully just how she should use the hair dryer, and to be sure she always had the device grounded to avoid a shock. But the lady was inattentive. The dog was barking, the mailman was at the door, and the five-year-old was teasing the baby. She replied vaguely, "Yes, of course. Thank you, but please excuse me. I have a dozen things to do this morning---"

But when she used the dryer for the first time, a jolting shock of electricity raced through her body—because she had failed to follow instructions.

This woman is not alone in tuning out words that were necessary to hear, for all of us at times are poor listeners. We talk more and hear less.

Many are the warnings God has given us through the apostles, prophets, and Jesus, that we must hearken. "He that hath ears to hear, let him hear . . ." recurs so frequently in the letters to the seven churches that one wonders if they were dull of comprehension. But what of us? How many times have we failed to listen?

July, 1971

Had Lot's wife been attentive to the warning words of the angel, she would not have looked back and lost her life. Failure to listen meant her destruction.

Failure to act on the Word is, in reality, failure to listen. For what earnest life-seeker can hear God's warning words and fail to respond?

Through the din of the cares of this life do we still hear the commanding words of Jesus, "Seek ye first the kingdom of God"? The elements of our lives are not vastly different from those of the early Christians. They, too, were surrounded by business, pleasure and care.

It is time we tuned our hearts to bring every thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ, and trained our minds to "think on the things that are true, righteous, lovable, virtuous and praiseworthy." For "this is the promise that he hath promised us, even eternal life."

So let us be attentive *listeners*, that we may be faithful *doers*. • •

Words to WALK By

General Complaint still has a large army under his control.

Remember, there has never been an over-production of kind words.

The expert fault-finder has no reason to rejoice in his accomplishment.

If you have accomplished all that you have planned for yourself, you have not planned enough.

Stumbling blocks may be carved into stepping-stones.

Many people would find it easier to keep their faith if they would exercise it more.

Many people know how to make a living—few know how to make a life.

Christianity gives the biggest man his biggest job.

Don't call your neighbor's wash dirty because your glasses are not clean.

Some minds are like concrete: thoroughly mixed and permanently set.

How long have you walked the King's Highway? How far have you traveled?

It is better to fall down on a job than to lay down.

Christian Youth in These Times

A Room for Grandma

TINA heard the shrill ring of the telephone. Mother answered it, and from what Tina could gather of the conversation, it was *not good news!*

"Yes, I'm sure everyone will be glad to hear that, Mother. You just pack up and come. We will have a room ready." Tina could hear her Mother saying these words to Grandma as she looked over her own pleasant room. Would Mother expect Tina to give *her* room to Grandma? The girl's heart sank.

"Tina," Mother called from the hallway, "Grandma Clay will be living with us... and... well, we will have to make room for her."

"And you expect me to give up my pretty little room, don't you, Mother?" Tina protested. "Mother, how could you?"

"Tina," Mrs. Barns' voice registered a keen disappointment as she looked at her eleven-year-old daughter. "Grandma must have a place to live, and I thought you loved your Grandma so much. Tina, what does the Bible tell us about being selfish?"

Tina's lower lip dropped as she busily went about moving her things into the smaller room farther down the hall. "Why, this room is not near so pretty as my own room, and it is so small! Mother, I'm moving, but not 'cause I want to..."

Grandma Clay arrived a few

days later, and right away she was brought to Tina's former room. Grandma looked pleased. "I suppose this room belonged to one of your girls. Someone has given up a very pretty room for me."

Tina could see Grandma Clay moving about getting her things unpacked. "In my room!" Tina mumbled bitterly as she passed by the door where her grandmother was settling. She threw herself on the bed in the tiny room farther down the hall and let the tears fall.

In a few minutes she heard someone knocking softly on her door. "Did I hear someone crying?" Grandma's snowy white head peeked around the door. "May I come in?"

Grandma seated herself on a hassock and picked up one of Tina's sweaters. "This looks a bit small for you, dear... but tell me," she said, looking more seriously at the child, "is that your room that I have moved into?"

"No," Tina sobbed. "Not anymore. Just make yourself at home." Grandma felt a little uncomfortable, to say the least, as she walked back into her new room. She felt neither wanted nor needed.

At the breakfast table a few days later, Tina's sisters were discussing their knitting and sewing. They were especially pleased that Grandma could be with

them. It was like having an expert around. She was very clever and could turn a very neat stitch so swiftly and easily. Joyce wanted to learn to knit. She needed a pink sweater and Grandma promised to help her with it. And twelve-year-old Faith was in the process of making a green plaid skirt for the school days ahead. But oh! to match the plaid! Grandma beamed, her blue eyes twinkling. "Why, these nice summer days we should be able to whip up quite a few things."

The girls rushed around to get their jobs done, feeling very happy and pleased to have such a clever member in the household.

Even Tina was beginning to like her new room better. She had a delightful east window, with a robin's nest only a few feet away, and in full view. Tina liked to watch mother robin poking food into the tiny chirping mouths.

She didn't have this to watch in her old room, and besides, Grandma had made her some new floral drapes to help bring out the pale green in the walls.

One beautiful evening while the older girls were busy with their handiwork, under Grandma's superb supervision, Grandma suggested to Tina that she get her sewing and get started. Tina tiptoed by Grandma's room, thinking that Grandma had spent a lot of time in there lately. To

end her curiosity Tina opened the door and walked in to have a look around. There, on the bed, were two beautiful hand-made sweaters. One was a soft yellow with gold buttons, and the other a pale blue—and just Tina's size! Funny that Grandma didn't give them to her, if they were supposed to be hers, she thought. She walked out quietly, feeling a little guilty. She knew that it was wrong to snoop, and she went back into her own room and found the piece of tweed fabric she was supposed to be sewing into a skirt. It just happened to have a sprinkling of yellow and blue in the pattern, the same colors as the sweaters she had just seen on her grandmother's bed. Coincidence? Tina wondered. Didn't Grandma buy her this very material? She gathered it up happily, with her pattern, and almost flew down the stairs.

Just then Mother brought in a dish full of huge blueberries from their new patch. The girls helped themselves as they enjoyed their hobby and their new friend, Grandma.

Tina shyly handed her material to Gram, hoping that she, too, would notice the colors and perhaps say something about the sweaters. Anyway, thought Tina, it wouldn't hurt to remind her how soon it would be school time again.

Gram laid out the pattern carefully as Tina handed her the pins as she needed them.

"What are we making?" Gram questioned as she smoothed the colorful tweed material with her skilled hands.

"A new skirt." Tina brightened up. This was her choice. "I really will need a new sweater to go with my new skirt. Could you suggest a color?" Tina watched anxiously for an expression on Gram's face that would tell her something—anything. But there was no visible response as Gram began cutting the cloth with the large pinking shears.

"You'll just have to learn to knit, Tina, like me!" exclaimed Joyce as she held out the rough beginnings of what would someday be—with hope—a fluffy pink sweater.

Tina looked at Mother, wondering if perhaps Mother could help her. But how could she tell her that she had snooped and found the sweaters on Gram's bed?

Then one Saturday morning late in August the lovely tweed skirt was all finished, along with a new blouse, a soft yellow one, her favorite color. Tina tried them on. They fit beautifully. Grandma Clay smiled as she noticed that the length was nice. "Lillian," she called to her daughter, "what do you think?"

"I think they are very becoming," Mrs. Barns replied. "And now, Tina, don't you think that you owe

your grandmother a very special thank you, after all she has helped you? You know, you didn't exactly make her welcome when she came."

Grandma was the first to notice that Tina's face showed a complete change of attitude. "Yes, Mother. I believe I do." Tina looked at her grandmother with new tenderness.

"Tina," Grandma said, "I try to do my part. I could have gone to a Pensioner's Home, but your mother thought I might be able to fit in here. I am very happy and grateful that it has worked out so well, but there is this feeling that you have."

"Gram, . . . Mother, . . . I'm sorry that I was so selfish. As far as I am concerned. . . ." Tina tried blinking back the tears as she walked over to her grandmother. "I love you, Gram." With that she embraced her warmly and planted a kiss on her wrinkled cheek.

Grandma bustled out of the room delighted. That was what she wanted to hear, that Tina was truly sorry. She came down holding the two pretty new sweaters. "Shall I give these to Tina now?" Gram was looking at Tina's mother.

"Yes, I think so. I think that Tina has learned a lesson and is now deserving of them." As the radiantly happy girl tried on first the yellow, then the blue, she was trying to decide which of the two she liked better. Her mother went on to explain that Grandma had them with her when she came, but because Tina had acted as she had, Gram simply could not give them to her until she had learned not to be so selfish.

Tina hugged her new possessions as she clutched them tightly to her. Why, Tina thought with true pleasure, Grandma is the very best Grandma ever! Just like Mother said, she is a real blessing to us. And we need her! The fashions the way they are, it is wonderful to have someone around that can sew, and to think that I didn't want to give up my room to her! Grandma live in a Pensioner's Home? Never! . . . And look what I have now!

Yes, Mother was surely right. By giving up she had gained. A very pretty green room with lovely flowered drapes—small, but easier to clean. And these lovely new clothes!

With shining eyes she placed both arms around the elderly woman's neck, "and most of all, my dear, dear Gram, you are so grateful for everything. I'd better start copying you right now, and learn to be really grateful for every big thing and every tiny little thing that I have."

"And Tina," replied Grandma with one of her deep, penetrating looks, "I, too, have learned a lesson. I simply cannot be selfish. I must be thankful, and most of all—learn to share." ● ●

LETTERS

Again I must say that I enjoy the Message, for it has over and over pointed to the Bible as a road map for our lives.

Grand Rapids, Michigan

E. T. B.

Trusting Through Trouble

This life is full of trouble. Perhaps our troubles are more personal—our home, our business, our profession. We may be worried about that son or daughter, our health problem, a habit we would give anything to kick right out of our life. The One whom we call Lord, and whose wisdom we would give anything to possess, spoke simple truth when He said, "In the world you will have tribulation." But He also said, "Be of good cheer, I have overcome the world."

We might say how rich we are, or how well we have done, but God may be saying, if we are not careful, "How I wish you were either hot or cold."

God comes first; His creative hand shaped all things. We need Him as never before. We need to look up to Him in faith and trust, because "The way of man is not in himself, it is not in man that walketh to direct his steps." We read, "Train up a child in the way he should go, and when he is old, he will not depart from it." Applying such advice to ourselves would make life much easier for us all.

Covington, Georgia

L. G.

In Comparison

The coming of the spring and summer always makes me think of the verse in Isaiah 61:11, "For as the earth bringeth forth her bud, and as the garden causeth the things that are sown in it to spring forth; so the Lord God will cause righteousness and praise to spring forth before all the nations."

Just compare this with the violence going on in the nations today. All the destruction and crime and wickedness speaks out of the approaching end of man's rule. Man surely has made a real bad job of running this planet, but we live in hope of a better system to come under Jesus Christ, Lord of lords and King of kings.

Great things wait for all who finish the work of overcoming evil in their own lives.

North Augusta, Ontario, Canada

G. H.

Invitation Accepted

I was recently shown a copy of a recent issue of the *Megiddo Message* with a coupon in it containing an invitation to try the paper for six months free of charge.

I would like to accept the invitation. If possible, I would like to have it begin with the April issue. It was tremendous!

Pomona, California

D. A. J.

Appreciative

Permit me to compliment you on the high quality of your magazine which I am now receiving. Special praise is due the article on "Women's Undress" and its follow-up in the May "Timely Topic." It's high time something in the true Christian spirit was said about this incredible sin against the very nature of man and the spirit of God. I look forward to reading more of the same quality articles in future issues.

Armonk, N. Y.

R. J. D.

The Best Yet

Your magazine is the best yet. I won't try to find a better one. Please keep up the good work.

Dallas, Texas

M. H.

MEGIDDO MESSAGE

Grateful

It has been a long time since I wrote you. Your *Message* is so instructive and lucid that I don't know how I could do without it. I have been reading your literature since 1925. Your work is great. What a blessing it is for someone to be teaching the truth. With all the mythology and traditions intermingled with the religious teaching of today, we as Christians could not get along without someone who is teaching the whole truth.

We can only say with King David: "The Lord hath done great things for us, whereof we are glad."

Kansas City, Missouri

J. E.

In Perilous Times

Our blessings have been many, even above those of most men. We have been given this life—a means of obtaining that more abundant life God has promised those who do good works.

Though at present we are vexed with evil all around us, we have been assured that the earth shall one day be cleansed from all evil—and, that right soon. That we are living in perilous times is most certain, for law and order have been thrown out the window, so to speak. Corruption, even in high places, is most evident. Our daily papers abound with news of inhumanity to man. Consider the cheating and stealing taking place in the business and factories of our country. Stealing tools, materials and goods from the company is now commonly accepted as the worker's right. Stealing time and being absent without a good reason is another problem confronting employers. Slipshod work in a couldn't-care-less manner is another increasing problem. Strife between management and labor is another evil so prevalent today.

If the principles given by Paul to employees and employers, as rendered in the Phillips' translation of Col. 3:22 through 4:1 were followed, there would be no strikes.

It seems that people in general are out to get all they can, while they can, with no regard to principle or justice. There are solutions to these perplexing problems, but they would be considered naive and impractical to employers and employees.

We know it will take God's judgments to right the wrongs we see in the world today.

Wausau, Wisconsin

J. T.

Challenged

In the *Megiddo Message* of May, 1971, on the back cover is a poem entitled "Faith." I find this a challenge for every child of God. I read it over and over and ponder the truth of it. How careful we must be to learn of Him and walk in this life to be His witness. In Webster's dictionary, the definition for witness is, "One who has personal knowledge or experience of something; something serving as evidence or proof." I want this proof to be the Master's life in me, as the poem states.

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

"You say that Christ did not exist at the beginning of the creation. If this is so, what man did God mean when He said, 'Let us make *man* in our image, after our likeness' (Gen. 1:26)?"

The Bible does not teach that Christ had any existence until He was born of the Virgin Mary. The apostle Paul says plainly that Jesus was "made of a woman, made under the law" (Gal. 4:4). How could He possibly have existed before the woman of whom He was made? Furthermore, He was "made like unto his brethren" (Heb. 2:16, 17). Moses prophesied of Him, that He would be a prophet "like unto me" (Deut. 18:15, 18), and we would never suggest that Moses existed prior to his birth.

The "man" of Genesis 1:26 is not an individual man but a composite body. Note the change from singular to plural within the text: "God said, Let us make *man* . . . and let *them* have dominion." This man is composed of Christ and His saints, a spiritual man that shall be given dominion in the world to come. The creation of this man is a part of God's spiritual work of recreating men and women to fill places of eternal honor in His future Kingdom here on earth. See Eph. 4:22—24; Rev. 19:7, 8; 2:26.

For further elaboration of this subject, see the MEGIDDO MESSAGE, April, 1970, "The Man Made in God's Image."

"You say that the power of the Holy Spirit has been withdrawn. If so, then how can we go about healing the sick, casting out devils, and setting the captives free? (Mark 16:16—18; Acts 1:4—8)?"

We cannot. And no man on earth today performs these miracles by the power of the Holy Spirit. That was a power given only for a special purpose for a limited period of time—until the end of that dispensation or age (see Matt. 28:20, "Lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world"; the Greek for "world," *aión*, means "age, generation; space of time clearly marked out").

I observe that in your listing of the powers of the Holy Spirit which you believe to be visible today you omit several "signs" that would be a real test: "They shall take up serpents; and if they drink any

deadly thing, it shall not hurt them" (Mark 16:18). This cannot be done today.

First Corinthians 12 lists a number of the powers that were given to the early Church as "diversities of gifts," with no one member receiving all those gifts. Chapter 13 then compares their value with the greater value and enduring quality of "charity," a term covering the entire duty of the Christian. Then verse 8 speaks of the duration of the gifts. They were not to be for all time: "Charity never faileth: but whether there be prophecies, they shall fail; whether there be tongues, they shall cease; whether there be knowledge, it shall vanish away" (v. 8). Verse 13 then pictures what remains after the gifts are done away: "And now abideth faith, hope, charity, these three; but the greatest of these is charity."

Joel 2, beginning at verse 21, predicts two outpourings of the Holy Spirit, an "early" and a "latter" rain. Peter at the day of Pentecost declared that phenomenon to be the "former rain" of Joel, and then repeated Joel's prophecy of the greater outpouring at the close of Gentile times when Christ shall return. Peter spoke of this time as the "last days": "This is that which was spoken by the prophet Joel; and it shall come to pass in the last days, saith God, I will pour out of my Spirit upon all flesh" (Acts 2:16, 17).

No, no one possesses the power of the Holy Spirit today. When it is restored, its possessors will do "greater works" than Jesus did; and certainly no one is able today to even equal the works of Jesus.

"Why do you use I Peter 5:4 to prove that the saints are not rewarded at death? It doesn't say a thing about where you are after death."

You are correct, it does not. However, it does show definitely that a person does not get his reward at death. Not until "the chief Shepherd shall appear" shall any "receive a crown of glory that fadeth not away."

The Bible teaches that the dead sleep between death and the resurrection, and that all hope of future life depends upon a resurrection. Paul was fully cognizant of this fact when he said, "For if the dead rise not, then is not Christ raised: and if Christ be not raised, your faith is vain; ye are yet in your sins. Then they also which are fallen asleep in Christ are perished" (I Cor. 15:16—18).

The faithful servants of God enumerated in Hebrews 11 all died "not having received the promises, but having seen them afar off, and were persuaded of them and embraced them" (Heb. 11:13). All shall be rewarded together "when the chief Shepherd shall appear" (I Pet. 5:4).

Meditations on the Word

(Continued from page 27)

cidence. The people had no lamp nor guide for their erring feet.

It is possible to read the Book and not apply its principles to our lives. Many do this. They read the Book through yearly but are ignorant of its simplest teachings. They read it but do not comprehend the plan of God. This takes more than casual reading, it takes study and right division of the word of truth (II Tim. 2:15). Jesus was explicit: "Ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free" (John 8:32). The Bible contains this truth which can be found by earnest study. We shall then experience true freedom and shall have a light to lead us through this dark night of sin.

It is not enough merely to *listen* to sermons. Individuals ought to *read* the Word of God for themselves and base their faith and hope directly on it. They should understand the Word sufficiently that they may conduct their lives according as God directs.

A genuine Christian character is the loftiest plane of human achievement. Without it all other attainments are futile; for when we stand before the Judge of all the earth to be rewarded according to our works (II Cor. 5:10), that perfect character alone will stand the test. The Word of God, read and treasured in men's hearts, becomes a direct influence to develop true character.

Inasmuch as it is our thoughts that have power over our lives, that which will develop our thoughts should be selected with care. To keep filling the mind with God's thoughts will tend to make our minds grow more like God's mind. As we become transformed in thought from the low level of human thinking to the high standard of God's thoughts, our whole life will be transformed into the moral image of our Master, so powerful is the Word of God if given a chance. As we walk in the path illuminated by its light we shall, out of our lowly, worthless state, become fit for companionship with the Creator.

"Therefore shall ye lay up these my words in your heart and in your soul..." With these words Moses admonished his people. The exhortation is as good today as it ever was and as needful. It is good to memorize thoroughly favorite Bible passages or even chapters, and repeat them often. And it is good to repeat these testimonies in exhorting one another to love and good works. Passages of Scripture firmly impressed on our minds become

one of the best helps in developing within us a Christian disposition.

In former days God worked with His people through the angels. They contacted His prophets directly, whether openly or through visions, and made known to them the will of the Lord. The Holy Spirit power as experienced by the apostles and others after Pentecost was another demonstration of how God worked with His people and confirmed the words spoken. However, as was predicted (I Cor. 13:10), when the written Word was completed the former methods of God's communication with man ceased (A. D. 70). Angelic visitation was no more, the power to do miracles ceased, knowledge imparted by the Holy Spirit or other supernatural means no longer was available. As Paul declared (I Cor. 13:13), "Now abideth faith, hope, charity, these three; but the greatest of these is charity." The Word alone remains in its completed form to give us faith and hope, and furnish light for our way. It fills this need perfectly. ● ●

The Upward Call

(Continued from page 12)

tleman got up and walked, as well as ever. *That* was eye-see, not hearsay. What about it, Mister Salesman?"

"Probably he was just ready to get better. It has happened lots of times."

"All that winter they were bringing sick people to Paul from all over the island, and he never failed to heal them."

"Mass hysteria!"

"You think so?"

"Certainly. There are lots of clever fakers in the world. It's a very interesting story, but it will take more than a sailor's yarn to convince me."

There was a minor uproar. Furious at the salesman's persistent "needling," Arbaces leaped to his feet and turned on the young man threateningly.

"Are you calling me a liar, young man?" he roared.

A table and a couple of chairs overturned with a crash as Carbo backed away, still cool, collected, highly pleased with the success of his sarcasm.

"Not at all, Captain, not at all. If I've offended you, I apologize." He extended his hand, which the sailor ignored. "It's just one of those things I'd have to see to believe."

"Would you believe if you saw?" Milo put in.

"Well . . . that depends. . . . Say, this is quite a storm we're having tonight, isn't it? . . . Outside—I mean."

(To be continued in next issue)



IN THE utterance of these few words the Psalmist has expressed for the present time the thoughts of the Christian. In its completed form the Word of God, given through the prophets, Jesus, and the apostles, is a thorough furnisher unto every good work. It possesses the needful instruction pertaining to the doctrine, it teaches us the moral standard by which we must live to be a benefit to society, and, principally, to be fit to associate with God's eternal family. It contains wisdom for reproof, that men may see the error of their ways. It comforts in sorrow, strengthens in trials, revives our hopes in periods of weakness, and points to the day of eternal bliss.

The Word of God, the Bible, is the only Book that reveals the Creator to man. Certainly we are not here by chance. The universe, the earth, and man himself as a creature, all reveal a Master Mind controlling a master plan. God's Word reveals this plan; it declares the purpose of earth's creation, and man's destiny on it. It alone furnishes the answers to these questions. It is the only lamp to lead us aright.

Can we say we love the Giver of all good and at the same time be indifferent to His Word? Can we have any reverence for the Almighty Being and never read His Word, never consult its pages concerning the course to take in life? Is it possible we ask the Great Protector's care and blessing, and despise in our hearts, if not openly, those who make the Word their entire guide and live by its every precept? *Is it possible?* IS IT POSSIBLE?

The call to God's service is indeed the noblest of earth's callings. The dearest, sweetest thing in life is the consciousness that we are called to be sons and daughters of the Almighty, that we can belong to His eternal family. His

Word fills us with this hope. It alone contains such precious promises. It reveals to us what manner of men we must be and the works that are pleasing to Him.

How vastly different would be the state of worldly affairs if the Word of God were the guide of those in authority! The great founders of this country were aware of this truth. George Washington said, "It is impossible to rightly govern the world without God and the Bible." Other great statesmen of his day agreed. Today, after a period when the Book has been neglected, our national situation is anything but encouraging. The Great Light is needed as never before to lighten our way.

As an example of what the Bible can do for a nation, we quote a brief paragraph from Green's *Short History of the English People*. "No greater moral change has passed over a nation than passed over England in the latter part of the reign of Queen Elizabeth. England became the people of a Book. And that Book was the Bible. It was read by every class of people in the nation, and the effect was amazing. The whole moral tone of the nation was changed." It is true the real sense of the Word was not understood, but the observance of some of the moral principles made the difference.

The Pilgrim Fathers who came to our shores and exerted such an influence in molding the foundation of the national life of this country, developed their ideals and the desire to be free to worship God in the atmosphere of that Elizabethan Bible Era.

By contrast, the Dark Ages with the numerous inhumanities to man was a period when the people were prohibited reading the Bible, even persecuted to death for doing so, and the Bible was driven out of circulation. This was not a mere coincidence. (Continued on page 26)

"Thy word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path" (Psalm 119:105).



God! Send Us Men

*God! Send us men whose aim shall be,
Less to defend some ancient creed,
Than to live out the laws of Right
In every thought and word and deed.*

*God! Send us men alert and quick
Thy lofty precepts to translate,
Until the laws of Right become
The laws and habit of the state.*

*God! Send us men of steadfast will,
Patient, courageous, strong and true;
With vision clear and mind equipped,
Thy will to learn, Thy work to do.*

*God! Send us men with hearts ablaze,
All truth to love, all wrong to hate;
These are the patriots nations need,
These are the bulwarks of the state.*

