

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

How Is Christ Our Ransom?

"Quo Vadis?"

The Upward Call

The Sabbath

Megiddo Message

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

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

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Editorially Speaking...

"This Thing Is From Me"

IN THE days of the early kings, the Lord sent forth a command and concluded it by saying, "This thing is from me." The people immediately obeyed, fully realizing that it was from the Lord Most Holy.

And today the Lord still speaks to His people, though not audibly. He speaks through His written Word. He has promised that "all things" will work out for their good; therefore *all things are* in His care and keeping.

Too often we have failed to realize that all things come from the disciplining hand of the Almighty. We have despised, rejected and avoided the very things which would strengthen, develop and mold a character worthy of perpetuation.

The Almighty in His great mercy provides both the means of development and the strength to perform His will, enclosed with precious promises. It is but our humble duty to accept and use what He has provided.

Those difficult circumstances, those ceaseless interruptions, those petty trials and disappointments that flood our lives are for our spiritual development. It is by these petty trials of everyday living that we are tested, proven and developed.

Those difficult circumstances are wonderful strength builders, ordinary though they may seem. Often we think they are more than we can bear, but by trying us to our limit the Lord increases our strength and endurance.

A little girl learning the piano was told by her teacher to exercise her fingers daily. The little girl said, "But it hurts my fingers to practice." The teacher kindly answered, "Yes, it hurts; but it strengthens them, too." Thinking seriously for a moment, the little girl replied, "Teacher, it seems that everything that strengthens, hurts."

Everything that strengthens does hurt, but how does the gold obtain its luster except through the fire? Or how does the musician produce those beautiful tones, but through strenuous and ardent practice? How does the orator perfect his eloquent speech but through much training and vocal exertion? All that is high and noble calls for self-discipline, and what is nobler than the character disciplined under the hand of God?

As we go from day to day, let us see God in everything. We, too, are preparing for a high and noble position. When hardships and trials come our way, we should recognize them as opportunities to enrich our spiritual career. The choicest things must cost, but God has promised strength to make the hardest spot our sweetest lot.

"See God in all things, great and small, . . . And give Him praise whate'er befall, . . . In life or death, in pain or woe, . . . See God, and overcome thy foe.

"For as each day unfolds its light, . . . We'll walk by faith and not by sight. . . . Life will, indeed, a blessing bring, . . . If we see God in everything." ● ●

How Is Christ Our Ransom?

PRAYER

Our Father in heaven, hallowed be Thy name. May Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done in earth as now it is done in heaven. But even though this blissful state cannot be realized worldwide until the return of Thy dear Son from heaven, give us the strength that in our daily living Thy will may be our will, Thy way our way.

We come to Thee with grateful hearts for the many kindnesses shown us. We thank Thee for the beautiful world in which we are permitted to live. We thank Thee for life itself, for our goodly mortal frame. We thank Thee for clear minds, for the powers of reason, reflection and retention; the ability to choose between right and wrong; the will power to reform our lives so our relationship to Thee may be changed from enmity to that of friendship.

We rejoice that Thou hast opened to us a door of hope, placing within our grasp the key to an endless existence, an arrangement whereby we can escape the limitations of mortality and gain a life that will always endure.

Help us, Father, to benefit from the exemplary life of our great Pattern who daily bore His cross of self-denial, doing always the things that pleased Thee and never seeking to please Himself. Thy dear Son gave His life as an example, a ransom to His immediate followers, to the world of believers of whatever age, even including the remnant in these last days that will be found ready and waiting for their Lord and Master when He comes to reckon with them.

Help us to benefit from this ransom, this effort that was made in our behalf, all the steps taken to assist us to live uprightly, to surrender self, to perfect holiness in our everyday living, to crucify every fleshly affection and lust.

May we as Christian men and women always remember to make supplication to Thee, lifting up holy hands without wrath and doubting. Help us to be sincere in our praying and honest in the confession of our faults, showing tenderness in our concern for others. In Jesus' name. Amen.

DISCOURSE

SOMETIME AGO a leaflet captioned "*That Man, Christ Jesus, Who Gave Himself A Ransom for All*" published over the signature, Roy E. Walker, was sent to the Megiddo Church. This publication upholds the viewpoint of Pastor Russell, founder of the sect known as the Millennial Dawn, forerunner of the well-known Jehovah's Witnesses.

Outstanding among this system of beliefs was the theory of the "fall" of Adam, and the "ransom" Christ paid to annul the harm Adam did when he fell. Robert Ingersoll, the noted infidel, used to style this supposed arrangement, the "damnation trap." Adam sinned by eating of the forbidden fruit in the Garden of Eden—which God foreknew that he would do—thus bringing death into the world. It also brought pain, suffering, the necessity for labor and toil, curses through life, and physical death. And to undo the damage Adam had done to his unborn posterity God devised the plan that His only begotten Son, Jesus Christ, should die on the Roman cross. Such a relic of barbarism seems entirely out of place in the reasoning of modern times, yet the aforementioned leaflet carries an author's dating, March, 1962.

Lest someone think us unfair in our criticism we shall quote from the leaflet: "At this point it might be well to consider what it is to be redeemed or ransomed. We read in the Genesis account that Adam and the woman partook of the fruit of the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil, which they were forbidden to do under the penalty of death. As a result of this disobedience a 'curse' was placed upon Adam—'accursed be the ground for your sake. In pain shalt thou eat of it all the days of thy life,' etc. Gen. 3:17, Rotherham; and 'Unto the woman he said, I will increase thy pain of pregnancy, in pain shalt thou bear children.' etc. Gen. 3:16, Rotherham."

The author then cites a number of texts which he thinks uphold the theory of man's inherent depravity through the "fall," and then comments: "From the foregoing Scripture it is evident that

Adam and the woman, by their disobedience, forfeited their access to the Tree of Life, and were driven out of the Garden of Eden into a world of pain, suffering and dying, in which all their children have been born. All have lost their right to the Tree of life."

This belief was not original with Pastor Russell, nor with any proponent of religious doctrine since the Protestant Reformation of the 16th century. Calvin was a strong advocate of the theory of "original sin," which he, in turn, had received from the writings of St. Augustine, one of the fathers of the Catholic Church. The belief of that Church is plainly spelled out in *The Catholic Catechism*, by Peter Gasparri, and confirmed in *The Catechism of Modern Man*, St. Paul Edition, 1968. We quote:

What did God forbid to our first parents in their supernatural state?

God forbade our first parents in their supernatural state to eat the fruit of the tree of knowledge of good and evil.

Did our first parents obey God's command?

Our first parents did not obey God's command, and therefore they lost justice and holiness owing to their grave sin of pride and disobedience, and, driven out of earthly paradise, they became subject to concupiscence, death, and all the other pains and miseries of life.

Did Adam harm his descendants by his fall?

Adam harmed his descendants by his fall, because by it he transmitted to them not only death, and other punishments for sin, but sin itself, or the loss of justice and holiness.

How did Adam transmit sin to his descendants?

Adam transmitted sin to his descendants in that he transmitted to them a nature deprived of that justice and holiness which God wished them to have; this privation is the habitual sin of our nature; in Adam it was but one sin, by propagation it was multiplied. This sin thus transmitted to posterity is called 'original sin.'

No Original Sin

But there is no such thing as "original sin." No man is punished for the sins of another. "His own iniquities shall take the wicked himself, and he shall be holden with the cords of his sins" (Prov. 5:22). "The soul that sinneth, it shall die. 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).

Paul, in I Tim. 2:6 may seem to be saying that Christ paid the corresponding price for the sinner. But let us see!

The Greek word *antilutron* translated "ransom" in I Tim. 2:6, means, "a corresponding price." The Jehovah's Witnesses and others advance the theory that due to Adam's transgression in the Garden of

Eden all mankind are doomed to eternal death, but Christ through His death on the Cross paid that corresponding price, therefore all mankind are freed from condemnation. This is a heathen doctrine that is not supported by the Word of God.

But before commenting on the possibility of either a "fall" or a "ransom" let us restate the classic definition of divine jurisprudence as given by Paul in Gal. 6:7, 8: "Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap. For he that soweth to his flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption; but he that soweth to the Spirit shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting." God cannot deny Himself. Whatever a man sows he shall reap. He is not condemned for another's sowing to evil and death, or justified by another's sowing to righteousness and life.

In the aforementioned leaflet the author points out that the word "ransom" occurs three times in the New Testament: twice in the Gospels, in two accounts of a single statement by Jesus; and once again in I Tim. 2:6. He refers to Jesus' words—spoken of Himself—"and to give his life a ransom for many" (Matt. 20:28 and Mark 10:45), and points out that the Greek word *lutron* is used. *Young's Analytical Concordance* defines *lutron* as "a price, ransom."

The author freely admits that Jesus did this from the time of His baptism to His crucifixion. His life was given in sacrifice to Israel and His disciples, and proved to be a "redemption price or ransom [*lutron*]" for them. His life of self-renunciation and obedience also is our perfect example, and by following that example we are ransomed. The context in which Jesus' words occur shows that to be His meaning.

The mother of Zebedee's children had asked that her two sons, James and John, might sit, the one on Jesus' right hand, and the other on the left in His kingdom. This request aroused the jealousy of the other ten disciples. Jesus then admonished them by saying: "Ye know that the princes of the Gentiles exercise dominion over them, and they that are great exercise authority upon them. But it shall not be so among you: but whosoever will be great among you, let him be your minister; and whosoever will be chief among you, let him be your servant: even as the Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many" (Matt. 20:25—28). Jesus gave His life as an example of unselfish concern for others and complete surrender to His Father's will; and they were to give their lives as a redemption price for the good of others, those whom they served, just as their Master was doing.

A Corresponding Price

In I Timothy 2:6 the word *antilutron* is employed, which has a broader coverage, being defined as “a corresponding price.” According to the popular religious philosophy, before Adam fell he was a *perfect* man. To ransom all mankind from the serious effects of his “fall,” *another perfect* man must give his life. This Jesus did, hence paying the corresponding price.

The meanings of these two words, *lutron* and *antilutron*, appear to be strangely similar. However, there seems to be no good reason for the position taken by the religious world, that Christ’s death on the cross was needed to ransom mankind from their inborn sins, and much less the Jehovah’s Witnesses’ theory that Christ was needed as a ransom to free mankind from the guilt of Adam’s sin.

The divine statement covering our first-mentioned proposition is in I John 3:3, “And every man that hath this hope in him purifieth himself even as he [Christ] is pure.” If each must cleanse himself from sin as Christ is pure, where is there any need for one so cleansed to be ransomed from sin? No sin would exist from which to be ransomed!

And as for the second proposition, the need to be ransomed from “original sin,” there is no such possibility. There is no such thing as “original sin.” Such a theory is directly opposed to the divine pattern, which is, “For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ; that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad” (II Cor. 5:10). According to the things *he himself* has done. Adam’s transgression in no way affects you or me.

“To Win Freedom for All”

But let us not attempt to argue with the divine Word when it says that Christ “gave himself a ransom for all.” However, let us apply to these words a meaning that will fit into the divine plan for salvation.

The wording in I Tim. 2:6 in the New English Bible gives a clue to a way in which Jesus could be said to ransom us. “He sacrificed himself to win freedom for all mankind.” He paid the corresponding price for that freedom that all successful contenders for life eternal must pay, the complete renunciation of self, the life fully resigned to the will of His Father. But His death on the cross did not provide the ransom. The man Christ Jesus has overcome sin, and to generations of Christians He has brought God’s power to overcome sin. “This is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith” (I John 5:4).

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“Christ sacrificed himself to win freedom for all mankind.” Let us analyze. “He sacrificed himself”—Christ’s death on the Roman cross was *not* Christ sacrificing Himself. That life was taken from Him forcefully by the corrupt priesthood who hated Him because of His denunciation of their hypocrisies. Jesus’ daily sacrifice was a sacrifice of His own will. He never sought to please Himself, but did always those things that pleased His heavenly Father (John 8:29). And that was the life that He laid down of Himself, which no man took from Him. John 10:17, 18 reads: “Therefore doth my Father love me, because I lay down my life, that I might take it again. No man taketh it from me, but I lay it down of myself. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again. . . .”

The life that He laid down and had the power to take up again was His everyday living. And He laid that life down as an *example* (I Pet. 2:21), as a “ransom” or corresponding price, that through a knowledge of His accomplishment we should be able to generate the strength to take up our cross daily, follow in His footsteps (Luke 9:23), and die to sin as He died to sin.

Wilson’s *Emphatic Diaglott* words I Tim. 2:6: “Who gave himself a ransom in behalf of all,—the testimony in its own seasons.” Christ gave Himself a ransom in behalf of all. He sacrificed Himself as an example to win freedom for all mankind who will be freed—freedom from themselves, not from the sin of Adam.

Freedom through Knowledge

A further thought on *Christ’s winning freedom for all mankind*: One definition of “ransom” is, “to release or set free.” If a ransom is paid for a prisoner of war, he is given his freedom and returned to his home base. So Christ, in giving His daily life in surrender to God’s will, was bringing freedom to others. His teaching during His earthly ministry brought freedom from mental thralldom, a release from the bondage of superstition and false beliefs.

The general meaning of the word “ransom” from both Hebrew and Greek is “to set free, to deliver from difficulty or danger.”

Jesus described this release or ransom in John 8: “Then said Jesus to those Jews which believed on him, If ye continue in my word, then are ye my disciples indeed; and ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free. They answered him, We be Abraham’s seed, and were never in bondage to any man: how sayest thou, Ye shall be made free? Jesus answered them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Whosoever committeth sin is the servant of sin. . . . If the Son therefore shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed” (vs. 31—34, 36).

Naturally we are all in the bondage of sin, slaves to sin, and what did Jesus say would free us? *To know the truth*. This is God-given freedom. To ransom is to set free, and that is how Christ will ransom or set us free, by giving us a knowledge of His truth. Did He not say: "If the Son therefore shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed"? Paul received his commission from Jesus, and he proclaimed in Rom. 6:17, 18: "But God be thanked, you, who once were slaves of sin, have yielded wholehearted obedience to the pattern of teaching to which you were made subject, and, emancipated from sin, have become slaves of righteousness" (NEB). How do we become free from sin? "By obeying from the heart that form of doctrine delivered to us." Though slaves to righteousness, we are Christ's freemen.

A Ransom for All

Some Scriptural analysts lay much stress on Paul's use of the word "all." Christ "*gave himself a ransom for all*." Taken at its face value, this statement would mean universal salvation, and if that were God's will, what puny man would have any right to object? But we should be careful not to take a position that would militate against the general teaching of the Bible. Jesus, in His first sermon, said: "Enter ye in at the strait gate: for wide is the gate, and broad is the way, that leadeth to destruction, and many there be which go in thereat: because strait is the gate, and narrow is the way, which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it" (Matt. 7:13, 14). Jesus made no exceptions here. He did not say He was picturing human life as it would be lived until the time of a general resurrection, after which all would have a second chance to prepare for salvation. He employed the word "destruction," a term with a definite meaning. Once an object is destroyed it is non-existent. Once the wicked are destroyed they will be non-existent—destroyed everlastingly. And "many," said Jesus, will choose this road.

Jesus told a certain class of Jews, "Ye will not come to me, that ye might have life" (John 5:40). To save such people God would have to abrogate His own principle of free moral agency and save them against their will.

Romans 2:4—9 pictures the "all men" to be ransomed, also another set of men who cannot be ransomed: "Or despisest thou the riches of his goodness and forbearance and longsuffering; not knowing that the goodness of God leadeth thee to repentance? But after thy hardness and impenitent heart treasurest up unto thyself wrath against the day of wrath and revelation of the righteous judgment of God; who will render to every man accord-

ing to his deeds: to them who by patient continuance in well doing seek for glory and honour and immortality, eternal life: but unto them that are contentious, and do not obey the truth, but obey unrighteousness, indignation and wrath, tribulation and anguish, upon every soul of man that doeth evil, of the Jew first, and also of the Gentile."

God's mercy is boundless. He takes no pleasure in the death of the wicked. He pleads with the children of men to turn from their evil way (Ezek. 18: 21, 32). He "will have all men to be saved, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth" (I Tim. 2:4). But He knows full well that they will not all come to that knowledge, or do the things that will fit them for salvation. The New English Bible employs the words, "whose will it is that all men should find salvation and come to know the truth."

Verse 4 is the natural sequence of what was said in the previous verses: "I exhort therefore, that, first of all, supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks, be made for all men; for kings, and for all that are in authority; that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and honesty. For this is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Saviour, who will have all men to be saved." It was God's will that all classes of men should come to a knowledge of His truth and qualify for salvation, but He knew they would not. The New Catholic Edition provides the following footnote to verse 4: "God by His antecedent will wishes all men to be saved, and no one is lost save by his own fault." With the foregoing in mind we can sense the incongruity of applying the breadth to the word "all" that some religious groups try to apply to it.

Then in addition we all need to be ransomed or set free from the power of the grave, from the limitations of mortality. This point is made in Hosea 13:14: "I will ransom them from the power of the grave; I will redeem them from death: O death, I will be thy plagues; O grave, I will be thy destruction."

Ransomed—Not Yet

It is within our possibilities to learn God's will. He has provided us with power whereby we can apply His law to our daily living. This accomplished, we are in a condition *to be* ransomed from the power of the grave, but are not yet ransomed. Physical death is the common lot of the most righteous person, the same as for the sinner. Except Jesus Christ, the holiest person that ever lived still needs ransoming from death, and that supreme work is delegated to Him who has already conquered that enemy. "Behold, I come quickly; and my reward is

with me, to give every man according as his work shall be" (Rev. 22:12).

Jesus said also: "For as the Father hath life in himself; so hath he given to the Son to have life in himself. . . . For as the Father raiseth up the dead, and quickeneth them; even so the Son quickeneth whom he will" (John 5:26, 21). As the Father has life in Himself, so He has given to the Son to have life in Himself, that He may give it to whomsoever He will. It is through Him that the righteous will be ransomed or set free from death.

Life and immortality will come from heaven, and Christ will bring it. "But our citizenship is in heaven from which also we eagerly await a Saviour, our Lord Jesus Christ, who will refashion the body of our lowliness, conforming it to the body of his glory" (Phil. 3:20, 21, New Catholic Bible). Surely Jesus did the things that will fit Him to be a ransom for all, and that ransom will be "testified" or accomplished in due time.

In this connection we should do well to remember Peter's words in Acts 3:26, "Unto you first, God, having raised up his Son Jesus, sent him to bless you, in turning away every one of you from his iniquities." Christ's first coming was to bless us by teaching us to turn from all iniquity, and at His second coming He will bless all who have thus turned from their iniquities, ransoming them from the power of the grave, making them equal to the angels, never to die.

"The Lamb of God That Taketh Away the Sin of the World"

When John the Baptist spoke those words that we find recorded in John 1:29, "Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world," he could not have meant for us to take his words literally; if so, Jesus' mission as the Lamb of God must have been a failure, for now some 1900 years later, sin is more prevalent in the world than it was in John's day.

We have already pointed out that sin is not something that can be picked up and disposed of as a box or parcel. Sin is the transgression of the law, and cannot exist apart from the sinner. Sin can be taken away, or cleansed, or removed, only as the sinner himself stops sinning. How then could Christ take away the sins of the world?

Hebrews 2:5 alludes to the "world to come, whereof we speak." It is the world of believers, the world of those who accept the authority of the Word of God to alter and refine their lives. To such the Lamb of God is the remover of their sins. Furthermore, when Christ, no longer a lamb, returns to earth armed with unlimited power as the "Lion of the tribe of Juda," He will forcefully take away the

sins of the world. Isaiah the prophet, looking forward to that auspicious Day foresaw a time when "the nation and kingdom that will not serve thee shall perish; yea, those nations shall be utterly wasted," a time when God's judgments being in the earth, the inhabitants will be forced to learn righteousness (Isa. 60:12; 26:9). That will be the Day when "all iniquity shall stop her mouth" (Ps. 107:42). • •

How To Raise A Crook

1. Begin from infancy to give the child everything he wants. This way he will grow up to believe that the world owes him a living.
2. When he picks up bad words, laugh at him. It will encourage him to pick up "cuter" phrases that will be your ruin later.
3. Never give him any spiritual training. Wait until he is twenty-one and then let him decide for himself.
4. Avoid the use of the word "wrong." It may develop a guilt complex. This will condition him to believe later when he is arrested for stealing a car that society is against him and he is being persecuted.
5. Pick up anything he leaves lying around—books, shoes, clothing. Do everything for him so he will be experienced in throwing the responsibility on others.
6. Let him read any printed matter he can get his hands on. Be careful his silverware and drinking glasses are clean and sterilized, but let his mind feed on garbage.
7. Quarrel occasionally in the presence of the children. Then they won't be too shocked when they see it in the world.
8. Give the child all the spending money he wants. Never encourage him to earn his own. Why should he have things as tough as you had them?
9. Satisfy his every craving for food, drink, and comfort. See that every whim and desire is gratified. Denial may lead to harmful frustrations.
10. Take his part against the neighbors, teachers, and policemen. They are all prejudiced against your child.
11. When he gets into real trouble, apologize for yourselves by saying, "I never could do anything with him." Or, "I was never meant to be a parent."
12. Prepare for a life of grief—you will have it.

—from *The Presbyterian Journal*.

"QUO VADIS?"

The following thoughts were part of a baccalaureate address by the Rev. George A. Sewell of Vicksburg, Mississippi, delivered to a graduating class last spring. We are reprinting from the May 1971 issue by permission of PULPIT DIGEST; copyright 1971 by Meredith Corporation.

IN THIS night of your soul's wrestling, your search for identity, your quest for fulfillment, I would like to inquire of you—"Quo vadis?" Where are you going? Where do you really want to go?

Going places in this world is quite a grim business. During the American Revolution, Tom Paine wrote: "These are the times that try men's souls." Not a century later, Charles Dickens, in editorializing on his day, said: "It was the best of times, it was the worst of times, it was the age of wisdom, it was the age of foolishment . . ."

I leave to you the diagnosis of our present times. Suffice it to say that the prognosis seems ominous. The things that appeared to have been nailed down are coming loose; long accepted principles are beginning to totter. At times the process is painful; nevertheless, it is a thrilling day to be alive.

Our mass media are, indeed, prolific with news about murder, dope, violence, campus disorders, and so forth. But have you read reports, equally well documented, about the underlying causes of these disturbances? To anyone more than casually interested, it is clearly evident that these revolts against authority—political and moral—are only the symptoms of a much deeper sickness within our social order. Surely we are the "afflicted" society.

The incredible fact is that, many years ago, Horace Mann argued that, if we had public education, it would be the panacea for our social ills. We now have more public education than Horace Mann dared to dream; yet, our problems are more compounded. A noted Roman Catholic clergyman has observed: "All you do when you educate some men is to turn a stupid devil into a clever devil."

We are living in a truly troubled time, in a world

of mutiny, deserted. We are adrift in boats that are very small, upon a mighty, storm-tossed sea, with our haven far, far away. What shall we do in these dreaded times? Where shall we go? "Quo vadis?"

I discover that, despite your apparent restlessness, you and thousands like you really want to go places. You want to travel down the sprawling highways of life that lead to changes in our social order; meaningful life experiences; and self-realization. I concede that to be a noble goal for a life in pursuit of genuine usefulness and unselfish happiness.

Come now, and let us consider some of the involvements as you go forth to accomplish the aforementioned goals.

There is nothing inherently wrong with change. To the contrary, it is a fact of life. We must change or die.

To be sure, there are many things in our society that need changing; and there are too many people in our society who are content with the status quo. How long must we live in the midst of crime, poverty, filth, squalor, disease, bloodshed and war? At the same time, we are the most affluent nation ever to inhabit this globe.

Change? Yes! But do not tear down, destroy, lay waste in one emotionally-charged hour those goods and values that have taken centuries to build.

All this leads me to this premise, which I now call to your attention: As you go forth to reconstruct our world, and to transform our social order, always remember that *significant change requires strict discipline.*

Our age does not look kindly toward discipline. The word carries a quality of courage, endurance, stamina, and sacrifice. Instead, we prefer short cuts, "wash-'n-wear," learning to paint oil portraits in five easy lessons. We are willing to bargain away all moral disciplines and divine dictates if, perchance, we achieve some vain shadow of pomp or circumstance that in the end may prove useless and without value.

Humanism tells us to express ourselves. Disci-

pline asks: Which self? "Wide is the way that leads to destruction, but narrow is the way that leads to life, and few there be that find it."

Frankly, we resent discipline. We seem to possess a natural disposition to rebel against restrictions. We desire to do as we please. But history affirms that such unrestricted living has always led to slavery. Giving free rein to bodily impulses leads not to freedom of the body, but to the slavery of lust. Freedom of the mind to wander at will leads not to the development of the mind, but to the slavery of ignorance. Freedom of the spirit is achieved only by a disciplined spirit. An undisciplined body ultimately means no body to discipline; an undisciplined spirit destroys itself.

So, you want to change the world? Fine! But remember that significant change demands strict discipline!

In the next place, as you go forth to make life meaningful, I beg you to realize that, in order for life to be meaningful, it must first be meaningfully involved.

On the surface, life does seem to be without rhyme or reason. At that level, life seems to be only an endless quest for physical survival—sustenance, shelter, and occupation. Accordingly, man, who was created a little lower than the angels, is scarcely a whit higher than the animals.

Our modern trinitarian deities of material gain, social status, and temporal security, which never were alive, are beginning to be exposed as the putrid imitations of reality that they really are. Like the sage of yesteryear, we too cry out, "Lead me to the rock that is higher than I."

A man's life consists not in the abundance of things that he possesses. A man's life consists of his inner rectitude of character; his basic faith about life's meaning; and his inner resources of spiritual power to control life and direct it to good ends. Thoreau said, more than a century ago, that "civilization is headed for hell because the world is busy making improved means for unimproved ends."

Meaning is relatedness. Meaning is interwoven in our relationships with our brethren, with God, and with the physical world in which we happen to be. The true meaning of life is discovered only when we enter the web of obligation and responsibility that is life, and see in it a symbol of giving and receiving.

However, as you move into life's mainstream, beware! The highways are treacherous. There are sharp curves, detours, by-passes, unmarked areas, soft shoulders, rough places, and hills. Besides, among the travelers are robbers, beasts and hustlers.

Let me tell you about a man who traveled this
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road. He was no drifter or wanderer. He never marked time. He always displayed a keen sense of direction. He knew where he was going. Never did he attempt a short cut for comfort or fame; or detour to avoid criticism or danger; or seek the thoroughfare of self-indulgence. The road that he traveled was the one road that leads to triumph. It was hard and exacting; it was straight and narrow; it was steep and rugged. But it is the way that still leads to life everlasting. It is the road of discipline—strict discipline!

The Great Man has invited you to travel this same road—will you choose it?

Finally, you want to travel the road that leads to self-realization.

You want to be a man or a woman. You want to achieve for yourself the highest possible. You do not wish to be hedged in, circumscribed, or frustrated by such trivia as race, color, creed, or previous conditions of servitude.

You have already taken an essential first step. You are about to complete your basic training. For the past four or five years you have been engaged in a quest for knowledge. That quest has been dominated, quite understandably, by science, scientific questions, and the scientific method. And I would be among the first to admit that such matters do have their valid claims. But I would also remind you that such emphases have resulted in providing us with an unbalanced culture. It is a culture that is largely interested in questions of *how* rather than *why*, in *quantity* rather than *quality*, in *parts* of creation rather than the *whole* of life.

It has been aptly suggested that man's life should be a trinity of activity—physical, mental and spiritual. The old adage, "Knowledge is power," is only a half-truth. Knowledge *is* power, but it is not necessarily power for the common good. An atomic bomb has power. And so do certain black militants, Students for an Anarchistic Society, and others well publicized by the mass media. We are not suffering from a lack of knowledge or power—physical or mental; it is our spiritual deficiency that is so debilitating.

The need of our day is not for reformed systems. The need of our day is for reborn men. We need young men and women who have been touched by the living spirit of God; whose heads and hearts have been anointed from on high; and whose souls are aflame with the consuming passion of doing the will of God.

You cannot begin to "do your thing" except as you are acquainted with Him who said: "I am the way, the truth, and the life." "Take my yoke upon you . . . learn of me." Despite our exalted intentions,

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The Upward Call



Synopsis

The first scene of this story about Paul the apostle takes place in Milo's Tavern, at Three Taverns where Paul stopped on the way to Rome from Melita after the shipwreck. This stormy night at Milo's Tavern are gathered several travelers, among them, Arbaces, a sea captain. The captain, in describing a previous experience in a stormy sea, tells about the very storm and the wreck of the ship on which Paul sailed as prisoner. He tells with enthusiasm about Paul's fascinating part in the voyage. The conversation leads to Christianity and its work, but mainly about Paul's part in the movement. Carbo, a young salesman, is skeptical and sarcastic in his remarks about the captain's elated description of Paul. The captain finally loses patience and threatens Carbo, who apologizes, and by way of changing the subject, says, "This is quite a storm we're having, isn't it? Outside—I mean."

Chapter One, Part Two

When the laughter subsided, Arbaces spoke with earnestness. "Well, all I can say is, you fellows haven't met the man. You should meet him. I'm certainly going to try to look him up when I get to Rome."

Milo brightened. "Oh, but I have met the man, Captain."

"You have?"

"Tell us about it, Landlord," Philistus urged.

"That's just what I've been wanting to do. It was after this same shipwreck, when the *Castor and Pollux* had docked at Naples with the prisoners and passengers. The convoy of prisoners was kept here overnight, split up among the Three Taverns, and

Paul was here. He sat in that very chair and talked to me."

Manlius nodded. "Very interesting. What was your impression?"

"*Impression* is the word! Whatever you may think of Paul, he impresses you. You can't ignore him. He's got personality, if you know what I mean. You'd know there was somebody of importance in the room if he didn't say a word. You can *feel* him."

"I don't like people like that," Carbo objected. "They give me the creeps."

"Paul gives you good sound reasoning. He gives you a lift. I'll admit he can make you uncomfortable. You feel sort of naked—as though he were looking right through you. He didn't have much to say about his shipwreck, but he said a lot about his God, and this Jesus Christ. I had heard of this Jesus, but I never knew until I talked with Paul just where He fitted into the plan. Seems this Jesus Christ is the Son of the one true God, as Paul calls Him; He came into the world as an ordinary man, and was crucified by Pontius Pilate—but He didn't stay dead. He arose from the grave."

"Yes," Philistus agreed, "that's the core of their religion, as I understand it. That's where the Christians and the Jews part company; the Jews won't accept the man or the fact—if it is a fact—of His resurrection."

"Nonsense!" Carbo exploded. "Do you believe that? Why, things like that don't happen nowadays."

"Did they *ever* happen?" Manlius asked.

"I'm not sure that they did; *I* never saw it."

Curio paused in a surreptitious raid on the bread, cheese and sausage on his employer's free lunch table.

"You ever been to Britain, Carbo?" he asked.

"No."

"Do you believe there is such a place?"

"Certainly."

"Why? *You* never saw it."

"I've talked to people who have, stupid."

Carbo saw his error too late, and his audience saw it, too. A gust of laughter swept the room as Curio slapped his adversary victoriously and heavily on the back.

"So—you *do* take some things on faith, don't you?" he cried.

Milo was quick to see the opening.

"Well, it just happens, that people saw this Jesus after he rose from the dead. Plenty of them, Paul says."

"Any of them you know?"—belligerently.

"Yes."

"Who?"

"Paul. He saw Jesus—more than once. He told me the story of his conversion—that was the first time he saw Him. He was a bitter enemy of the Christians, persecuting and killing them, but he saw a vision on the road to Damascus and was struck blind for a time. Since then he's been a red-hot Christian—white-hot, you might say."

"Are you a Christian, Landlord?" the centurion inquired.

"Well, . . . I wouldn't say so. As Paul explains it, it isn't easy to be a Christian. It's a religion that controls everything you say or do, and even what you think."

"Not for me!" Carbo was emphatic about it.

"I think you're right for once, Carbo," the landlord shot back. "It takes a pretty good man to live the life of a Christian."

For the first time the salesman lost his temper. He sprang to his feet and shook his fist angrily at the host.

"Why, you old — Are you insinuating that I'm not a good man?"

"You heard me, Junior. Now sit down. Children should be seen and not heard."

Carbo sputtered into silence. Manlius was next to speak. "You say he's the chief man among these Christians. What will they do, now that he's a prisoner?"

"Oh, you don't know Paul. He's not idle, by any means. I understand he governs his churches by letter—he's a very talented writer—and since he came here he has built up a large church in Rome. I've seen him once—you see, he is not in a regular prison but under house arrest. He lives in his own apartment under guard, and while he can't go, his friends can come to see him. He's the busiest man in Rome."

"Even so, it's a long time to wait for a hearing." Philistus protested, indignantly. "Two and a half years! What are our courts coming to, anyway? Why, back in the days of Augustus—"

"I heard a report the other day," the landlord cut in, "and I hope it's true, that he has had his trial and has been released."

"Good!"—from the centurion's corner. "I don't know why I say that, not even knowing the man, but I feel I almost know him."

"As soon as I can get to Rome," Milo promised warmly, "I'm going to find out. I want to see him again."

"Better not," Carbo sneered, "he might make a Christian of you."

"I only wish I had the courage to take the step," was the sober reply. "Maybe some day I will."

Then the scoffing salesman made another tactical error.

"Did he do any tricks for you?" he asked innocently.

This was too much for Milo. He crossed the room with long strides and seized the offender by the shoulder. His tone was wrathful. "What do you mean? You speak with more respect, or out you go! Understand?"

"It's raining outside."

"All the worse for you. Here's your money back. How about it—go or stay?"

"All right, all right, I apologize. What I meant was, did he do any of these remarkable things such as the Captain says he saw?"

"Yes, sir, he did. You know my slave Theodorus? You know he almost lost his arm when a tree fell on him years ago, and his left arm was withered and crooked. Paul came along, and you should see him now. Curio, get Theodorus in here."

Manlius leaned forward, his face a study in attention.

"To get back to this central figure—this Jesus Christ. What ever became of Him?"

"Paul says He ascended bodily to heaven, to His Father, forty days after He arose from the dead."

"Uh-huh—" from the irrepressible Carbo—"anything to get rid of the evidence. How do you know He ever lived?"

"The Christian Church is pretty good evidence, I'd say. It's here—you can't deny it. It wasn't here before. It certainly wasn't founded on a dream."

"But now that He's in heaven, or with His Father," the centurion persisted, "what now? What's it all about?"

Milo's eyes glowed with enthusiasm as he replied.

"Paul says He is coming again—not now, but away in the future—to take over the earth and set up a Kingdom, a place where no one is sick, or hungry, or unhappy, or no one ever dies. No war. No oppression. No graft. No suffering or pain. No poverty—"

"Day dreams!"—from Carbo.

"You don't have to have it, young man," snapped Arbaces, breaking a long silence. "As I understand their faith, this time will be only for those who have worked for it and made themselves worthy of its grandeurs."

"In other words, the practicing Christians, and those like them." The officer's words came thoughtfully. "It sounds narrow—but I don't see how it

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Words of Encouragement

DID YOU ever stop to estimate the value of a word of encouragement?

Business executives well know what a single word of praise at the right time can do for the conscientious employee, how it can lift his spirits, renew his interests, and stimulate his production.

But you don't have to be an executive to give encouragement. All of us need it, and all of us have opportunities to give it to others.

Although Moses was not permitted to enter the Promised Land, hear the encouraging words he addressed to his successor: "Be strong and of a good courage, fear not, nor be afraid of them: for the Lord thy God, he it is that doth go with thee; he will not fail thee, nor forsake thee. . . . Be strong and of a good courage: for thou must go with this people unto the land which the Lord hath sworn unto their fathers to give them; and thou shalt cause them to inherit it. And the Lord, he it is that doth go before thee; he will be with thee, he will not fail thee, neither forsake thee: fear not, neither be dismayed."

The prophet Isaiah knew the stimulating powers of encouragement, when he wrote: "They helped every one his neighbor; and everyone said to his brother, Be of good courage. So the carpenter encouraged the goldsmith, and he that smootheth with the hammer him that smote the anvil, saying, It is ready" (Isa. 41:6, 7).

All through God's Holy Word ring out the notes of encouragement. Said the sweet singer of Israel, "Wait on the Lord: be of good courage, and he shall strengthen thine heart: wait, I say, on the Lord" (Ps. 27:14). And again, "The angel of the Lord encampeth round about them that fear him, and delivereth them" (Ps. 34:7). And again, "The Lord is nigh unto them that are of a broken heart; and saveth such as be of a contrite spirit. Many are the afflictions of the righteous: but the Lord delivereth him out of them all" (v. 19).

As Christians we are duty-bound to speak often to one another, and these words of encouragement may bring extraordinary results. That one spark of encouragement you have withheld may be all that is needed to kindle the hope of a fellow Christian into a splendid flame. It may even save a soul from spiritual death.

Encouragement is like a candle suddenly brought into a dark room. It casts a glowing light over everything. So why not bring your candle of encouragement into the life of one who is despairing

in the dark, and brighten the corner where you are?

How stirring are these words to the Hebrews: "We ought to see how each of us may best arouse others to love and active goodness, not staying away from our meetings as some do, but rather encourage one another, all the more because you see the Day drawing near" (Heb. 10:24, 25, NEB). We have never been so near the dawning of the New Era as we are this very minute. So why not give your word of encouragement to "him that is weary" now! • •

Words to WALK By

There's a lot of wasted effort in quarreling and then making up—so, why start?

Thinking can get you out of a problem. Worry can get you into one.

When you crack a smile, you increase its value.

Doing good for others is good for you, too.

A habit is strong but brittle. You can break it by dropping it.

Procrastination makes an easy job seem more difficult.

People are judged both by the company they keep—and keep away from.

Emergencies often bring out strengths in us we never knew we had.

If you want to leave your footprints on the sands of time, wear work shoes.

Wrongdoing can result from leaving something undone as well as doing something wrong.

The time to procrastinate is when you are angry.

If you are truly charitable, you won't care whether it's tax deductible or not.

*"The harvest home of God will come
And after toil and care,
With joy untold your sheaves of gold
Will all be garnered there.*

*Then day by day along your way,
The seeds of promise cast
That ripened grain from hill and plain,
Be gathered home at last."*

UNDERSTANDING THE BIBLE

"Study to shew thyself approved unto God."

The Hell of the Bible

THIS IS the final lesson in our study of the hell of the Bible. In this lesson we shall see exactly where the cruel and diabolical belief originated—not in the Bible, but in the teachings and writings of men blind to its beauty and truth.

We shall conclude our outline as follows:

- V. Concepts of Hell
 - B. Early American Concepts
 - C. Present Day Concepts
- VI. Without A Literal Hell

The words of Jesus are still true: let us take earnest heed, lest they apply to us: "Ye hypocrites, well did Esaias prophesy of you, saying, This people draweth nigh unto me with their mouth, and honoureth me with their lips; but their heart is far from me. But in vain they do worship me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men" (Matt. 15:7—9).

V. CONCEPTS OF HELL (cont.)

B. Early American Concepts

To the early evangelists, hell was very real. Their concept of hell was drawn from a very literal interpretation of the New Testament Scriptures coupled with the words of Milton's *Paradise Lost*. It is said that the Puritans, a religious separatist group of the era immediately preceding the settlement of America and during the early years of the Republic, drew their ideas of hell more from *Paradise Lost* than from the Bible. For the people of this period of history, the flames of hell provided a strong deterrent to sin and evil. Evangelists and preachers of that time helped to keep the topic alive in the minds of the people through countless sermons on the subject.

1. The Puritan concept. The Puritan concept was best exemplified in the words of its great champion, **Jonathan Edwards**. Jonathan Edwards was born in 1703, less than a century after the landing of the

Pilgrims. He was reared in an age when religion was an integral part of life, his forefathers having come to a new land in search of religious freedom. His father before him was a minister and it never occurred to him to be anything else.

Jonathan Edwards' preaching has been described by one as a sort of "spiritual hurricane" before which his hearers collapsed. His words are described as "like a sharp sword to his hearers, as painful to their hearts and consciences as burning metal on flesh." He used the threat of literal hellfire to subdue his hearers. It was not unusual for him to warn his congregation that they might be in the flames of hell "before the end of this very night." I quote from one of his sermons: "There is nothing that keeps wicked men at any one moment out of hell but the mere pleasure of God [His arbitrary will] . . . they are the objects of the anger and wrath of God that is expressed in the torments of hell. And the reason why they do not go down to hell is not because God is not angry with them as He is with many now tormented in hell. . . . Yea, God is a great deal more angry with many that are now in this congregation than He is with many of those who are now in the flames of hell.

"It is not because God is unmindful of their wickedness that He does not let loose His hand and cut them off. . . . The wrath of God burns against them, their damnation does not slumber; the pit is prepared, the fire is made ready, the furnace is now hot, ready to receive them; the flames now rage and glow. The glittering sword is whet, and held over them, and the pit hath opened its mouth under them."*

This is but a small sample of one of many sermons of Mr. Edwards on the subject of hell. There is no doubt that he was sincere in his belief, but a man may be in dead earnest and be dead wrong.

It is noticeable in reading sermons by him on the subject that there is almost nothing quoted from the Scriptures. While a very literal interpretation of a few verses might appear to support the contention, this is the doctrine of men, and **not** the teaching of the Bible. Previous lessons in this series have given

* *Jonathan Edwards, Puritan Sage*, edited by Vergilius Ferm, Library Publishers, New York, 1953, pp. 366, 367.

innumerable proofs that a literal, burning hell does not exist.

2. Other concepts in early America. It appears from the records available that the general teaching of the early centuries of America were not unlike that of Jonathan Edwards. At this time, "piety and earnestness in the things of religion were taken to be axiomatic as the greatest issue of life, an integral part of a basic tradition, . . . the pulpit was a worthy ambition and respected in the community." **Puritanism and Calvinism** were the religions of the day, both of which would be considered overly-fundamental in our day of modernism, yet out of these people came the Fathers of our country, some of the greatest statesmen the world has ever known.

C. Present Day Concepts

At this point in the twentieth century, it is doubtful if anyone would be scared into the church by the threat of literal hellfire, and hell as a deterrent to wrongdoing has almost lost its impact. The reason: in the majority of churches, the subject is never mentioned. According to one writer, the records of a large church in New York City indicate that no sermon has been preached on this subject within 40 years.

Modern Christianity's concepts of hell fall into three distinct categories: Those who believe in everlasting torment for all those who reject salvation; those who believe in a modified version of hell, believing that some may be restored and saved; and those who believe in conditional immortality. The latter theory comes closest to the truth in that immortality is conditional; only those worthy will be saved, but the unsaved are not condemned to a burning hell.

1. The fundamentalist concept. Churches today who accept a very literal interpretation of the Scriptures are generally classed as fundamentalist. This type of interpretation of the words of Jesus results in a strong belief in a literal burning hell. The words of some of these fundamentalist preachers are so like those of Jonathan Edwards they might well have been taken from the script of one of his sermons.

Evangelist John R. Rice, editor of the *Sword of the Lord*, an independent religious newspaper, is a strong believer in hell. Writing in a sermon printed in a 1969 issue under the title "Is There a Bible Hell?" he says in part: "I make no apology for preaching on Hell everywhere I go. . . . Jesus preached about Hell all the time! . . . We would not have to preach to people about compassion if we understood what hell was like. . . . It would be a good thing if we would warn church people that they had better make sure they keep out of hell. . . .

Let me repeat it: The Lord Jesus Christ preached about hell all the time."

He further explains: "If you have not made sure your poor immortal soul is sure for heaven and that you have escaped the horrible clutches of hellfire, then you are nothing but a fool and you may wake up in hell where the fire never goes out and the worm never dies. . . . It is a horrible thing to die unconverted and meet God and wake up in hell. . . . it is instantly heaven or hell when you die. . . . There cannot be any heaven if there is not any hell—a torment for the unregenerate sinners!"*

Unlike the Jonathan Edwards' sermons, Dr. Rice quotes Scripture freely to prove his contentions. These texts, taken from the words of Jesus, have all been explained in earlier lessons or will be included in this, the final lesson of this series.

Anyone understanding the truth of the Bible can readily perceive the false doctrines contained in the above quotation. As pointed out in earlier lessons in this series on hell, the entire doctrine is founded on the false belief in an immortal soul; and without that as a foundation, the belief falls of its own weight. **An understanding of the words used by Jesus which have been translated "hell" in most versions of the Bible should readily convince all truth seekers that in every instance the meaning intended was the grave, destruction or annihilation. Not once is there any suggestion of eternal punishment or torment, suffering or literal fire.**

In the light of plain Bible evidence and with all due respect for fundamental religion, we restate our position: **there is no literal hellfire** as pictured by this writer and others of like belief.

2. The modified concept of hell. A somewhat modified concept of hell has been taught by some who could not believe that God could possibly burn or torment human beings. Origen, a third century church father, questioned the existence of eternal hellfire; but his doubts were overruled by the majority of the church fathers who adhered to the literal interpretation of Jesus' words. Supporters of this theory hold that God will continue to "seek the salvation of His erring children. They protest that eternal punishment would be disproportionate penalty for sins committed during man's brief period on this earth." They hold that punishment for sin in the hereafter will be disciplinary with some hope of reformation and eventual salvation. For support of this viewpoint they use Acts 3:21; I Cor. 15:22; and I Cor. 15:28.

The answer to this viewpoint is evident: There

* *The Sword of the Lord*, edited by Dr. John R. Rice, Murfreesboro, Tennessee, Apr. 11, 1969, Vol. XXXV, No. 15.

can be no sin overcome after death. The eternal principles: "Where the tree falleth, there it shall be" (Eccl. 11:3). In the words of the Revelator, "He that is unjust, let him be unjust still: and he which is filthy, let him be filthy still: and he that is righteous, let him be righteous still: and he that is holy, let him be holy still" (22:11).

3. The conditional immortality concept. This concept of hell came about because a segment of Christian believers refused to accept the theory that evildoers will permanently coexist with the righteous eternally. It teaches complete and final destruction of those who have rejected the mercy of God which has been freely offered to all. The theory finds support among those who are repelled by the teaching of everlasting punishment.

In defense of the theory, Mr. S. Parkes Cadman writes: "The endless torture of human beings is not taught by the passages in question [the author refers to various quotations from Jesus' words]. They, rather, indicate in metaphorical language the absolute extinction of willfully rebellious souls by self-determined processes." Mr. Cadman cites the statement of the apostle Paul to substantiate his position: "Whose end is destruction" (Phil. 3:19).

Conditional immortality is a Bible principle; the reward will be given only to those who fulfill the requirements. Jesus promised to reward everyone according to his works (Rev. 22:12), and promised "overcomers" to reign with Him and His Father (Rev. 2:26; 3:21). Immortality, eternal life, is promised to those who seek for it by patient continuance in well doing (Rom. 2:7).

John S. Bonnell, writer of the book **Heaven and Hell**, criticizes the theory because it denies the immortality of the soul! This doctrine, although a product of paganism, has become so thoroughly ingrained in the minds of modern theologians that it is accepted as truth. As stated many times before in these lessons, **souls are mortal**, hence the theory contains a point of truth.

4. The modernist concept. At the opposite extreme from the preachers of a literal burning hell are those who hold that God will save all mankind, even the vilest sinner, if he calls on the Lord before he dies. Believers in this category never mention the subject of hell; God is thought of as a God of nothing but love for everyone, even the sinner.

While God will not condemn anyone to a burning hell, neither will He save those who are not worthy. God is a God of justice and judgment; He will save eternally the righteous and destroy eternally the wicked. The promise is: "The righteous shall never be removed: but the wicked shall not inhabit the earth" (Prov. 10:30). The wicked "shall be punished

with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power" (II Thess. 1:9).

VI. WITHOUT A LITERAL HELL

Some fundamentalists make the claim that "You can't have a heaven without there being a hell." One writer decries those who "explain hell out of the Bible," and cites what he calls "plain and forcible passages of Holy Writ" that prove to him that hell, as a burning fiery furnace, exists. Of the parable of **The Rich Man and Lazarus**, he comments: "He [the rich man] might not have believed in a hell before he went there, but that did not alter the case, he went there just the same. . . Listen to his soliloquy; 'I am tormented in this flame.' Mark you, this man in hell says, 'I am tormented.'" He also makes mention of other New Testament Scriptures that prove to him that there is such a place of torment. The parable of the Rich Man and Lazarus has been discussed in Part 1 of the series on **The Hell of the Bible** in the May, 1971 issue of the Megiddo Message. We will discuss other verses of Scripture that on surface reading would make it appear such a place of torment exists.

A. Verses Using the Word "Fire"

One of the prime reasons behind the belief in literal hellfire is a misunderstanding of the use of the term "fire" in the Scriptures. Fundamentalists can see nothing in its use but literal, hence when "fire" is coupled with such adjectives as "everlasting," "devouring," "consuming," or "unquenchable," they visualize a flaming inferno in which the wicked are tormented eternally.

Fire symbolizes destruction, not eternal torment. The definition of "fire," as given by the Hebrew Lexicon is: "A symbol of destruction, whether of men or things, so that to be destroyed by war is said to be destroyed by fire: figuratively used of the judgments of God." This definition should be kept in mind when studying God's Word. **Fire consumes, destroys, burns up; it in no way preserves, tortures or torments.**

Fire is used repeatedly throughout the Bible as a symbol of destruction, but never as a means of punishment or in the sense of torment. We will review some verses using "fire" in the Bible.

1. Matthew 3:11, 12. "... he shall baptize you with the Holy Spirit, and with fire: Whose fan is in his hand, and he will thoroughly purge his floor, and gather his wheat into the garner; but he will burn up the chaff with unquenchable fire."

A careful reading of this text should convince all

that no part of it is literal. No enlightened person would ever pray to be baptized with literal fire. "Baptism by fire" denotes the punishments of the judgments of God. The context of the verse clearly indicates two rewards, blessing for the righteous and punishment for the wicked. As the wheat and the tares are symbolic of the righteous and the wicked respectively, so the fire is symbolic of God's wrath which will fall on the disobedient. Note also that the tares will be "burned up"—they will not continue to burn forever in torment, but will be consumed, destroyed.

2. **Matthew 25:41.** "Then shall he say also unto them on the left hand, Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire..." Exponents of the torment theory seize upon this statement of Jesus in an effort to prove their doctrine, but no such thought is attached to the text. **Fire**, as used elsewhere in the Bible, is a symbol of destruction, not torment. **Everlasting fire would simply be everlasting destruction** (II Thess. 1:9). "Everlasting punishment," as it is translated in verse 46 of the same chapter, denotes the same destruction. **Harper's Bible Dictionary** defines "everlasting punishment" as a "metaphorical term very appropriate to the context but distorted by the influence of Milton and Dante."

3. **Matthew 13:40—42, 49, 50.** This chapter is an exposition of many of Jesus' parables. We must remember that a parable is an illustration which teaches a moral or spiritual lesson, thus the terms in the parable are only illustrations, symbols: the tares that are gathered and burned represent the wicked who shall be destroyed by God's judgments. The wailing (v. 50) results from the unfaithful realizing what they have lost, not from physical suffering.

4. **Jude 7.** "Even as Sodom and Gomorrha, ... are set forth for an example, suffering the vengeance of eternal fire." This text shows the results of pursuing evil: they pursued it to their own destruction. Like the fires of Gehenna, the fire destroyed the cities. The use of "eternal fire" here could not possibly mean that the fire will never burn out, that the wicked will be tormented forever, or Sodom and Gomorrah would be still burning. The "vengeance of eternal fire" was God's immediate judgments on the wicked cities.

5. **II Peter 3:7.** "But the heavens and the earth, which are now, by the same word are kept in store, reserved unto fire against the day of judgment and perdition of ungodly men." Here again the terms are symbolic: the heavens represent the rulers; the earth, the people ruled over; the physical earth shall abide forever (Eccl. 1:4). Again, fire represents the judgments of God which shall come upon the earth to destroy the wicked. There is no suggestion of

torment or punishment lasting forever. Note that they are "reserved unto fire," NOT reserved in fire.

6. **Rev. 20:9, 10, 14, 15.** These verses are often used to picture the torments of hell, but such a meaning is not intended. In verse 9 "... fire came down from God out of heaven." We cannot imagine literal fire coming down from God. The fire represents the judgments of God, hence it is said to come from heaven, since the judgments are at God's direction. The destruction is the same as that described in II Thess. 1:9, "everlasting destruction" of the wicked servants.

In verse 10, the devil is said to be "cast into the lake of fire and brimstone," where he "shall be tormented day and night for ever and ever." The "lake of fire" is "the second death" (v. 14), or penal death. As to the torment, it cannot be literal, else it would contradict plain Bible teaching. Revelation 21:4 describes the Kingdom as free from all pain and suffering, hence there could not be torment of any duration. The phrase is used figuratively to describe the remorse of the unfaithful servants (Luke 13:28).

The phrase "day and night" also limits the torment to their lifetime, for when the Lamb and the saints are the light (Rev. 21:24), there shall be "no night there" (v. 25).

Verse 14 is self-explanatory. The "lake of fire" is "the second death." If the "lake of fire" represented a literal burning hell as some believe, then hell would be literally cast into hell. This would be nonsense. The term simply refers to the end of all death. It is the time when the Kingdom is fully come and "there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away" (Rev. 21:3). Then death will have been "swallowed up in victory"; and when there is no more death there will be no need for hell—the grave.

To be a messenger you must know the message.

TEST YOURSELF

1. Where did the doctrine of hellfire originate?
2. What do you consider the strongest Bible evidence that there is no literal hell as taught in theology?
3. Explain the word "fire" as it is used frequently in Scripture.
4. Explain the "vengeance of eternal fire" as used in Jude 7.

*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?

Christ Ends the Law

PAUL wrote of the error of his Jewish brethren: "For I bear them record that they have a zeal of God, but not according to knowledge. For they being ignorant of God's righteousness, and going about to establish their own righteousness, have not submitted themselves unto the righteousness of God" (Rom. 10: 2, 3). They had zeal, but did not realize that the Mosaic law was only the outward form of the law and not a law that could give life. They were not willing to give up the law that could make nothing perfect and accept the righteousness of God or the law of faith which could cleanse from sin.

Note carefully Romans 10:4: "For Christ is the end of the law . . . to every one that believeth." What is the end of the law? "*Christ is the end of the law.*" The answer is unmistakable.

Among the Galatian brethren must have been many who held to the old law, believing it was necessary to be circumcised and to "keep the law of Moses." They, like their ancestors, "observed days" (4:10) and became "entangled with the yoke of bondage." Because they gave heed to some law-teachers who perverted the gospel of Christ (Gal. 1:7), and in obedience to their teaching observed "days, and months, and times, and years," the Apostle addressed them, "O foolish Galatians, . . . are ye so foolish?" (Gal. 3:1—3). What benefit could they derive from obeying a law no longer in force?

TWO COVENANTS—One Abolished

In the foregoing Scripture the Apostle uses a powerful argument to show the abrogation of the old law. From the historical account of Hagar and Sarah he creates an allegory. Hagar and Sarah rep-

resent the "two covenants"—Hagar, the covenant made on "Mount Sinai, which gendereth to bondage," and Sarah, the "truth which came by Jesus Christ," which makes men free. Their two sons, belonging to one father (Abraham) represent the children of the two covenants, whether Jews or Gentiles.

Notice that the covenant from Sinai is denoted by a "bondwoman," while the children of Sarah are "free." The Sinai covenant was "bondage," and Paul warned them to "be not entangled again with the yoke of bondage" (Gal. 5:1). "What saith the scripture? Cast out the bondwoman and her son." The old covenant is abrogated; it is abolished.

The old covenant is done away; therefore all who cling to it cling to an "old decayed system" that in God's order vanished away over nineteen hundred years ago. . . . Surely this is *Nehushtan*—a piece of brass.

"God directed Moses to make a brazen serpent in the wilderness. It was all right for its object. But 765 years after that we find idolatrous Israel worshipping that serpent." Hezekiah removed it, and "brake in pieces the brasen serpent that Moses had made: . . . and he called it *Nehushtan*" (II Kings 18:4).

"What is the difference between the worship of that serpent, and the worship of those who in many cases actually make a god out of the Sabbath, which, though it was appointed of God for a certain purpose and time, as the brazen serpent also had its use, had passed away, in the order of his will?"†

Taken Away

"He taketh away the first, that he may establish the second" (Heb. 10:9). Throughout the Epistle

† H. M. Riggle, *The Sabbath and the Lord's Day*, pp. 42ff.

to the Hebrews two covenants are contrasted—the “first covenant” and the “second.” These two covenants are also called “testaments.” The word “testament” is defined as a “complete arrangement, or dispensation.” So when Christ took away “the first, that he might establish the second,” there was a complete dispensational change of the law, the setting up of an entirely new divine order and government. Christ is the “mediator of the new testament,” which has superseded the entire old economy, which was given to the Israelites on Mount Sinai.

The old covenant, the law of Moses, could not make men perfect by the obedience it required; for this reason it was weak. And for this reason it was abolished. “For there is verily a disannulling of the commandment going before for the weakness and unprofitableness thereof. For the law made nothing perfect, but the bringing in of a better hope did; by the which we draw nigh unto God” (Heb. 7:18, 19).

The two covenants are contrasted again in Heb. 12:18—29. While the seventh-day keepers point us continually to the law of Moses, the author of Hebrews looks to God’s new and better order: “Ye are not come unto the mount that might be touched, and that burned with fire, nor unto blackness, and darkness, and tempest, and the sound of a trumpet and the voice of words”—all these were symbols of the old law delivered on Mount Sinai (read Exodus 19).

“But ye are come unto Mount Sion, and unto the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to an innumerable company of angels, to the general assembly and church of the firstborn, which are written in heaven, and to God the Judge of all”—the law which came from Mount Zion was the “new covenant” which speaketh “better things.” This is the voice which speaks “from heaven” of things which “cannot be shaken” and which “shall remain.”

Jeremiah foresaw the end of the old law. He says, “In those days, saith the Lord, they shall say no more, The ark of the covenant of the Lord [the ark contained the two tablets on which were written the Ten Commandments, I Kings 8:9]: neither shall it come to mind: neither shall they remember it; neither shall they visit it; neither shall that be done any more. At that time they shall call Jerusalem the throne of the Lord; and all nations shall be gathered unto it” (Jer. 3:16, 17). A better covenant was to replace the old.

The Ministration of Death Was Done Away

Paul in II Corinthians 3 discusses the termina-

tion of the old covenant, the “ministration of death, written and engraven in stones.” God “hath made us able ministers of the new testament; not of the letter, but of the spirit: for the letter killeth, but the spirit giveth life.

“But if the ministration of death, written and engraven in stones, was glorious, so that the children of Israel could not stedfastly behold the face of Moses for the glory of his countenance; which glory was to be done away: how shall not the ministration of the spirit be rather glorious?

“For if the ministration of condemnation be glory, much more doth the ministration of righteousness exceed in glory. For even that which was made glorious had no glory in this respect, by reason of the glory that excelleth. For if that which is done away was glorious, much more that which remaineth is glorious.

“Seeing then that we have such hope, we use great plainness of speech: and not as Moses, which put a veil over his face, that the children of Israel could not stedfastly look to the end of that which is abolished: but their minds were blinded: for until this day remaineth the same veil untaken away in the reading of the old testament; which veil is done away in Christ” (II Cor. 3:3—14).

The first covenant is defined as “the old testament,” the “ministration of death.” Why was it called a “ministration of death”? Heb. 10:28 tells us that “he that despised Moses’ law died without mercy under two or three witnesses.” Persons who violated that law were put to death. Death was the penalty for breaking the Sabbath (Ex. 31:14), for blasphemy, theft, and the like.

Paul says plainly that this old covenant, this “ministration of death written and engraven in stones”—what law, except the Decalog, was “written and engraven in stones”?—this law is “*done away*”; it is “*abolished*” (II Cor. 3:7, 13). The context is clear: Paul contrasts that which “is done away” with the “spirit” which giveth life, the “ministration of righteousness”; the “glory that excelleth”; and this “*remaineth*.”

We quote from Mr. Canright:

“We can scarcely conceive how it were possible to employ words that more explicitly assert the abolition of that covenant which was written in the tables of stone [than are found in II Cor. 3]. If we were to admit the division of the law into two laws, as the Adventists contend, and were held to prove that one of those laws was abolished, we certainly should find more abundant proof to dispose of that written on stone than of the ‘ceremonial’ part. The reason is obvious. The former constituting the real

(Continued on page 24)



BEE HELPFUL

Children, has it ever seemed to you that Mother and Daddy are always asking you to do things for them and that you never have the time to do what you want to do? Children are usually very apt to think this way, but have you ever thought about the many things your Mother and Daddy do for you every day? So many, many times you could help them and make their work easier by giving of the strength that you have. Even if you are only small, you can help them in your small way, especially by being obedient and always doing cheerfully what they ask.

Our story this month, about BEE HELPFUL, has a very sad ending but we hope it will encourage you to be more helpful to Mother and Daddy and everyone else around you.

ONCE THERE was a boy named Alfred who was the only child in his home. He was very selfish; and often he was determined to have his own way. But he had his good points, too.

Alfred lived in the country; and during school holidays, he

visited a friend of his who lived in the city. Then his friend in turn visited him during the summer vacation.

As soon as his company came, Alfred thought it was quite too much for his mother to ask him to help her. He forgot how very ill she had been; and how frail she still was. Indeed, it was hard for him to think of anything but having a good time with his friend.

The two boys had planned to spend a certain day at the creek, fishing. Of course they were eager to start as early as they could that morning. After they had gathered together everything that they needed for their trip, they went out to the kitchen and found Alfred's mother packing a lunch for them.

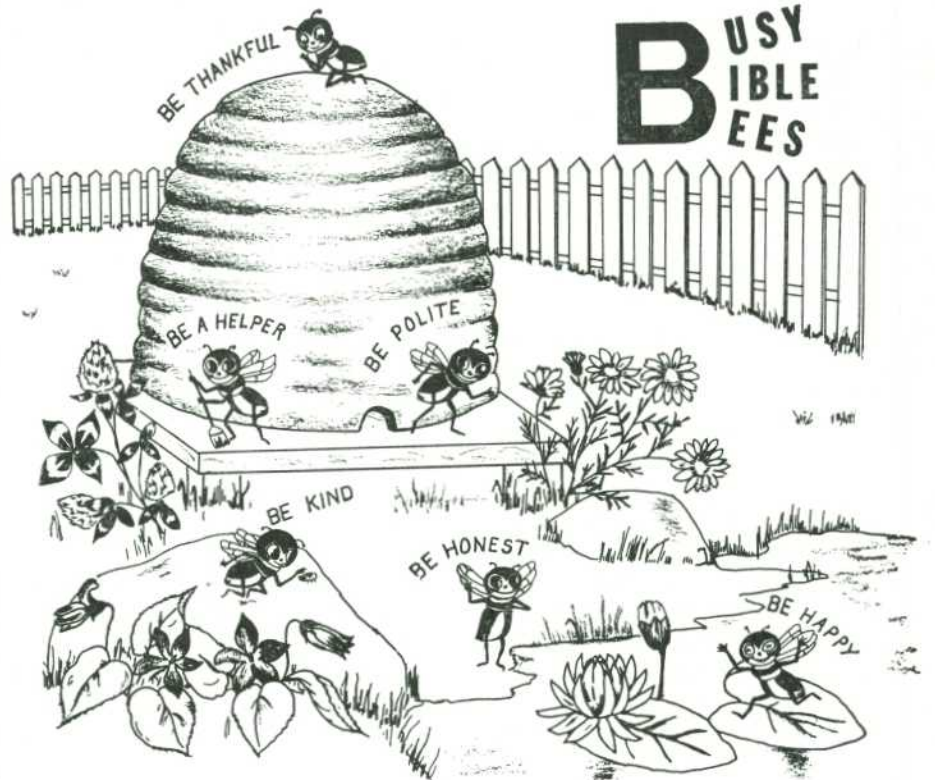
"Alfred," she said, "I wish you would help me a little with the work before you go. I am afraid I shall not be able to do it all alone. Would you mind stopping long enough to wash the

dishes and clean up the kitchen for me?"

Alfred began to pout, but his mother continued, "I really wish you were not going fishing today. Your father will be away all day; and I would rather not be left alone, for I do not feel as well as usual. But I will not keep you, if you will wash the dishes before you go."

"Now, Mother," said Alfred angrily, "why do you ask me to do that when you know I want to get started early? If I have to wait half the day, I don't care to go at all."

Just then the bee began to buzz about Alfred's ears, "Help your mother! Help your mother!" it said. But Alfred did not pay any attention. "Let the dishes go," he cried. "I don't care whether they are ever washed or not." And picking up the lunch which his mother had packed so nicely for him, he started toward the creek. He did not even look back to say "good-by."



The boys found fishing very good that day. They caught a fine string of trout, ate their lunch, and in the middle of the afternoon were ready to start for home. Alfred was much pleased with their catch, and on the way home he said over and over, "Won't Mother be glad we went fishing today, when she sees our string of trout? She is so fond of trout." But even while he was saying it, he could not forget the tired look on his mother's face, or the hurt look in her eyes when he had refused to wash the dishes for her.

When the boys reached the house, it seemed strangely quiet. They found the dishes cleared away, and the kitchen neatly swept. Alfred's mother was lying on the couch, and she seemed to be resting very comfortably.

"See, Mother," said Alfred, "isn't this a nice string of trout?"

But Mother did not answer. Alfred spoke to her again. Still no answer. He touched her hand then, and found it icy-cold.

Then the awful truth dawned upon him—his mother was dead! She had died while he was fishing; but she had done the work that she had asked her boy to do.

All his life, poor Alfred felt the sting of the bee that had buzzed about him on that summer morning. What hurt him most deeply was that he would never again have a chance to help his frail little mother who had done so much for him.

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We hope that every boy and girl who hears or reads this story will remember Alfred and the buzzing of "BEE HELPFUL." Learn to be helpful now while you are young. If you do, it will become a habit that will stay with you through the years to come and will prove a blessing all through your life.

Do you know, a very wise man once said, "Even a child is known by his doings, whether his work be pure, and whether it be right." Why not memorize this verse to help you become a better person. You will find it in your Bible in Proverbs 20:11. • •

The cool of the day is advancing
 The journey is almost complete;
 Soon the Master's kind voice will be calling
 His own to a place of retreat
 Where the storms and the winds and the
 tempests
 Have no pow'r to prevail o'er His flock;
 For they listened when He was calling,
 They answered His timely knock.

Timely Topics

THERE IS probably no name in the English language and indeed, in the language of any Christian nation that is used more often than the name "Jesus." At the same time, there is no individual whose identity and mission is the subject of such wide disagreement and misunderstanding.

To Jesus' contemporaries in the Jewish priesthood, Jesus was a fanatic and a faker.

To the nominal Christian of today Jesus is a sort of divine St. Nicholas, who bestows the rewards of a future life in heaven upon any person who takes His name on their lips and accepts His role as their personal Saviour.

The non-Christian intellectual looks upon Jesus as a great man, possibly the greatest man who ever lived, a moral reformer and champion of the downtrodden and the poor.

To the uneducated the name Jesus is used in a blasphemous and sacrilegious manner and as a substitute for intelligent expression.

Many people today believe that Jesus was a partner in the trinity, co-equal and co-eternal with God. Many, including ourselves, believe that Jesus was born of the Virgin Mary and was the Son of God and the Son of man, not the Eternal God and Omnipotent Creator. A few people refuse to accept Jesus' divine origin and consider Him an illegitimate child.

Theories concerning Jesus' future role in the affairs of this planet are also confused and contradictory. Many denominations teach that at death we go to heaven to be at home with Jesus, in spite of His words in John 13:33, "Whither I go, ye cannot come." Some believe that He came to take charge of the affairs of this planet around 1914. (If this theory be true, why have conditions since that time grown steadily worse?) The same people profess that we shall never see Him, though Jesus Himself said His coming would be as visible as the lightning that cometh out of the east and shineth even unto the west (Matt. 24:27).

The belief that Christ will soon return to earth as King and take over the reins of government is being proclaimed more widely than in any time past, and this we believe to be the teaching of the Bible,

as Jesus Himself said in His closing message to mankind: "And, behold, I come quickly; and my reward is with me, to give every man according as his work shall be" (Rev. 22:12). But even this plain Bible teaching regarding Jesus' future role is subject to many variations in popular theologies too numerous to cover in this article.

Lastly there are a few people who refuse to believe that Jesus ever lived or rose from the dead, and consequently have no expectation of His future role.

In addition to these rather traditional beliefs regarding Jesus, there has arisen a new concept among the post-hippie crowd, known variously as the "Jesus Freaks," the "Groovy Christians," the "Jesus People." Young people who have become disillusioned with drugs and the "establishment" are turning to "Jesus." They are turning off drugs and sex and turning on with Jesus. Some, especially in the West, espouse the hippie uniform, long hair, leather jackets, fringe, bags and sandals, or go barefoot. They preach love not hate, peace not war, live in communes and spend their time reading the Bible or other "Jesus" literature. In the East, the "Groovy Christians" dress more conventionally, live comfortably at home, read and study the Bible in groups, and spend their time seeking converts. They think Jesus, they talk Jesus, they sing Jesus—but do they really *know* Jesus?

Evangelist Billy Graham feels that this is the greatest spiritual revival of the century, that the tide is turning, a moral awakening is underway, a mass movement back to the principles of Christianity is taking place. But is it? This would be wonderful, if it were true. Studying the Bible is much to be preferred above taking dope, smoking, drinking, indulging in illicit sex or just plain mischief. But is the "Jesus" movement really directed toward Jesus the Son of God?

These young people, through no fault of their own, do not know the real Jesus. Adrift on a sea of confusion created by their elders, they are lost. They detect the hypocrisy of established religion and are searching for new directions. In some cases, their life-style contrasts that of their parents, bearing a closer resemblance to the life of the Great Master. They avoid the struggle for material things; so did Jesus. They proclaim a dogma of love and brotherhood; so did Jesus. They are interested in converting others; so was Jesus.

In general, however, they have accepted the Jesus of theology who bears little resemblance to the Jesus of the Bible. Their Jesus is an experience, an emotional feeling, or a mere statement of belief, a hero to be worshiped more than a Master to be obeyed. The true Jesus was a dictator of men's

lives, a commander, a challenger, a teacher of authority who could say, "If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow me" (Luke 9:23); and again, "Be ye therefore perfect, even as your father which is in heaven is perfect" (Matt. 5:48).

Jesus' love was practical, not sentimental. "If ye love me, keep my commandments" was His philosophy of love (John 14:15). The most cruel hoax ever launched into the religious world, the doctrine of the sacrificial death of Christ, is still the foundation of most theological teaching and the focal point of most sermons published or broadcast. And this doctrine is accepted by the majority of the young "Jesus" enthusiasts.

Jesus' great mission during His earthly life was to show us how to live to be worthy of eternal life in His kingdom. Jesus' great mission for the future is to act as Judge and Conqueror and finally King of kings on this earth. Because of this fact, the name "Jesus" is the greatest name we can speak; but to be blessed by Jesus we must *do* His commandments (Rev. 22:14).

If we could only persuade our young people today of the power of this real "Jesus," we would see such a moral reformation in this world as has never been seen before. But the reality of this hope must await the coming of Elijah the prophet whom Christ will send ahead of Him to prepare the way, to "turn the heart of the fathers to the children, and the heart of the children to their fathers" (Mal. 4:6).

His coming will fulfill the promise of Jesus, "Elias truly shall first come, and restore all things" (Matt. 17:11), or as rendered in the Greek Testament, to "bring in a great moral reformation."

In the meantime, let us all, old and young, do what we can to acquaint others with the real Jesus and to demonstrate His precepts and principles in our own lives. ● ●

Prayer For Strength

Our Father,
When we long for
Life without trials and
Work without difficulties,
Remind us that
Oaks grow strong in contrary winds
And diamonds are made under pressure.

With stout hearts
May we see in every calamity
An opportunity;
And may we never give way
To the pessimism that
Sees in every opportunity
A calamity.

The Upward Call

(Continued from page 11)

could be any broader and be consistent. What it lacks in breadth, it makes up in depth. . . . But what about those who have died?"

"They shall rise, too, by the same power that brought Jesus Christ from the dead."

At this juncture Curio entered with Theodorus, a bearded, middle-aged slave, evidently Greek. Milo introduced him courteously to the group, and after reviewing his injury and disability, asked him to tell what happened. Theodorus was only too glad to oblige.

"When Paul, the Christian preacher, stayed here two years ago, he saw me as I went through this room. He called to me and questioned me. He asked me if I would like to be healed. Of course I did, and as I looked into his face I actually believed he could do it if he wanted to."

"What did he do to you?" Philistus inquired.

"He laid his hands on my arm, and I felt a thrill go through my whole body. I could see my arm straighten out and fill out while I watched it. I was healed! I know! You can't tell me anything different."

He bared his arm, and the guests crowded around to see and touch. As Milo pointed out, the old scars were there, but the bones were straight and the muscles firm and hard.

"Who else saw it?" someone asked.

"My wife, and my son Titus, and Curio here. There was also an officer just come from Spain. Unfortunately, my wife has gone to visit her parents tonight, and Titus is in the army, but Curio is here. How about it, Curio?"

"He's right. Every word he says is true. I don't know much, but I know what I see."

The landlord turned abruptly on the salesman.

"What do you say now, Mr. Skeptic?"

The reply was prompt, confident, and a little surprising.

"Magic."

This was Curio's chance again, and he seized upon it with alacrity.

"Oh, you believe in magic, do you?"

"Why, sure; everybody does."

"And the evil eye, and fate, and all that sort of stuff?"

"Well, . . . I'm not taking any chances."

"What a man! He doesn't believe in the gods, he doesn't believe in man, but he believes in all the silly old superstitions!"

Nettled by the resulting laughter, Carbo blurted out:

"You talk like a Christian yourself, Curio."

"No, I'm not, but I'd rather be a Christian than a scoffer like you. At least they know what they want."

"One thing is sure," Milo mused, "things haven't been the same since Paul was here."

"You think his brief stay here has made some changes in your way of life, do you?" Philistus queried.

"Well, I wouldn't go that far—"

"Don't ask *him*—ask *me*!" the porter broke in, excitedly. "You know what happened the next week? A drove of slaves from a ship came by, going to market. They were a sorry-looking lot, sick and hungry; and what does Milo do? He sets out food and water for the whole crowd, for free. And that wasn't the only time it happened, either. That, brothers, was a change!"

As the host covered his embarrassment by silencing his outspoken servant, Manlius addressed the contractor.

"You seem to have some knowledge of their doctrine, Sir. Have you had some contact with them?"

"Not much. I have, however, heard a good deal, second hand, in various parts of the world where I have done business. You'd be surprised how vigorous the movement is. Just what its appeal is I couldn't say, but they attract not only slaves and laborers, but officials, nobility, well-to-do business men—all classes of people. It seems to have a special appeal to the women, for I understand they give women a much higher position than the Roman world does. The Romans won't even admit that women have souls; the Christians give them equal status with men."

"A step forward, I should say. Perhaps it will have a good influence even beyond its own borders."

"If you'd heard some of the stories I have—" came the loud and now familiar voice of Carbo.

Philistus made a gesture of impatience.

"Oh, I've heard them, but I don't believe everything I hear—maybe you do. All the Christians I have seen or heard of directly seem to be good, quiet, honest people, but they are different. They are people of one idea. They have convictions, and they are willing to stand up and die for their convictions. Now such people as that don't worship animals, or hate all men, or make their bread with the ashes of murdered children, as the stories have it."

"How numerous are they?" asked Manlius.

"No one knows, so far as I can learn. But you find them everywhere. There are thriving churches in Judea, of course, and in Antioch, and Ephesus, and Smyrna, and Philadelphia. Yes, and Philippi and Colosse and Thessalonica and Corinth."

"How about Athens and Alexandria?"

"A few. There are small groups all over Egypt and in the islands, and I understand their missionaries are pushing out into Gaul and Spain and Illyria."

For once, Carbo managed a sober, sensible question.

"How do you account for this growth? Aren't there already more than enough religions?"

"I don't know that I can account for it. I've often wondered. Of course, the old gods are tired and worn out and very few really respect them any more. The world seems to be ripe for a change, but why it should be a religion so strict and difficult is hard to explain."

"I think I know the answer," said Milo, simply but with confidence.

"Yes? What is it?"

"Paul."

"Undoubtedly you are right. The movement must have merits in itself, but it takes a man like Paul to sell it to the Roman world. I've heard his name many times as I've poked around the world... but I never thought our paths would cross at the Three Taverns."

"In your opinion, will the thing be permanent, or will it die out when its present leaders are gone?" asked the centurion.

Philistus stood with his back to the fire, his eyes thoughtful and his words measured and sincere.

"Who can tell? The study of Mediterranean religions has been sort of a hobby with me, although I'm not particularly religious myself. In fact, I don't see how an intelligent man could be, after looking into most of the cults. Christianity dares to be different, and for that reason it is pretty sure to draw persecution upon itself."

"But that is not its real danger, as I see it. Persecution only stimulates a worthy movement. The greatest danger is from within. Its standards are so very high and it is so difficult to live that it will do well to keep itself from relaxing to gain popularity. And if it should ever become official, that would certainly be its ruin. It is quite possible that it will survive, but in a very much modified form."

There was a brief silence, broken by the voice of the old sailor. "Well, we've all spoken our piece but you, Centurion. What's your opinion?"

"To tell the truth, I find it all very interesting. Like our contractor friend, I have seen a great deal of priests and temples and cults and mysteries the world over, and I'm not exactly sold on any of them. Naturally, whatever gods there are, I'd rather have them for me than against me, so I've kept up a form of worship, but with a good many doubts and reservations."

"I know very little about these Christians, except

what I have learned tonight; and I have never heard of this Paul; but if my old friend Julius Didianus liked him, I would probably like him too. Julius was always a pretty good judge of men. Paul must be a remarkable character, and I hope his ability isn't going to be wasted in a world that is always short of good men. I'm sorry I didn't know about him while I was in Rome; I would have gone to see him."

"By the way," Milo tried to be casual, but there was anxiety in his tone, "did you hear any rumors in Rome that the government may be getting ready to move against the Christians?"

"Unfortunately, yes," answered the centurion. "There is talk that the people are demanding a scapegoat for the great fire, and the Emperor is trying to place the blame on the Christians. It could be bad."

"I imagine that you, having the instincts of a gentleman, are glad to be outward bound, with this thing in the air," said Philistus.

The officer's reply came in crisp but cultured tones. He, too, evinced a grave sincerity. It had been a strange but memorable evening in his life, and he showed it.

"How right you are. If it comes to persecution, I want no part of it. The soldier has enough dirty work to do at best. I hope it doesn't spread to Syria; naturally, I want to be as far away as possible. . . . And still, I would feel more noble to be one of them, staying and dying for something I could really believe in."

It is well known that most people have a vein of decency in their nature, if it but can be uncovered; and this proved to be Carbo's finest moment. His mask of cynicism fell away and his better self came through.

"I don't blame you. I'm against that sort of thing myself."

"What! you?" Arbaces affected a great astonishment.

"Yes, me! I'm no saint, and I know it. I like the games as well as the next one. I like to see the fights. I like to watch the lions pounce. I like to hear the bones crack and see the blood run. But when it comes to killing innocent people—women and children—for what they believe—well, it's not my style. I don't like this man Paul, but I hope nothing bad happens to him."

"So do I. So do we all," Curio echoed soberly.

The depressing prospect seemed to affect the entire group. Conversation slowed and died. The hour was growing late. Arbaces rose from his bench by the dying fire, stretched himself, and sauntered to the buffet table to cut himself a piece of cheese.

"So Nero says the Christians burned Rome!"

There was scathing irony in his tone. "Now what possible object could they have in doing such a thing as that?"

Milo laughed, a short, mirthless laugh. "I wonder if he expects sensible people to believe—"

He broke off suddenly, conscious of the presence of Caesar's officer. One by one the guests rose uneasily to their feet, all eyes on the representative of Imperial law and order. Such words bordered on treason, and the consequences could be terrible. Milo's Tavern might be a bad place to spend the night, storm or no storm.

Manlius surveyed the tense and apprehensive group with a slow, stern gaze. Slowly he rose to his full height, his polished insignia glittering in the lamplight. After what seemed an eternity, he spoke, gravely and firmly, with long, shattering pauses between his sentences.

"Gentlemen, I am an officer of the Imperial Roman Army. As such, I am under the command of the Emperor, whoever and whatever he may be. Naturally, I could not be expected to sit and hear him criticized.... I'm not saying what *I* think... but I know very well what you are all thinking... and some things need to be said.... So—I shall just step outside and let you say them!"

NEXT ISSUE:

The Problem of Ambition and Personal Sacrifice

THE SABBATH

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covenant, the statutes of that nation, to which the latter were appended, it was only necessary to remove the statute basis, and, of course, all the rest goes with it.... And how very specific and unmistakable this language in II Cor. 3. All Bible readers know that nothing but the Ten Commandments were written in the stone tables, and it is affirmed that the very thing that had been 'written and engraven in stones' is abolished, and done away."

Some religious theorists seeking to uphold the Decalog say that it was not the law but the "ministration of death" or the death penalty, that was done away. But the testimony is plain: the ten prohibitory laws, written and engraven in stone, were done away. Still others claim that the glory of Moses' face was what was done away, but the context seems too explicit to be ambiguous. The thing itself that was glorious—the law—"is abolished."

Butterflies flit; bees work.

LETTERS

From A Reader

I read a lot, but lately I am being more careful of what I read. The magazine I receive each month from your church is my favorite. And lately I have been reading the Gospels. They have meaning now. I am beginning to understand. The cobwebs are being swept out of my mind. My life is so much better now.

I am still a young person, but I have found peace now and a wonderful future. I know I have much work to do, but I am going to try very hard—to "run the race," I mean.

The best thing that could happen to this earth right now is for Jesus to come to us. The earth needs this desperately. And oh! I have so much work to do on myself.

Bradford, Pa.

M. S.

Help Each Other

Let us strive more each day to get rid of the evils that come from the heart, and to always remember the golden rule.

I am so thankful for all the blessings of life, and to have Christian help. You can't do my work, and I can't do yours. But we can help each other.

Laurel, Indiana

Mrs. E. M.

Called to Be Free

We are called to be free, but not free to do as we please. To allow ourselves to be guided by the Spirit will free us from the bondage of sin. While we are grateful for all the help we receive, the battle against self is our own responsibility, and nobody can do our work for us.

The natural man is evil, and all his ways are clean in his own eyes. But the Christian's concern is: How do I look in God's eyes? We deceive ourselves if we think we are something when we are nothing. God tries the hearts, and He knows that in us naturally is no good thing.

To gain victory over just one person—self—does not sound difficult, but we soon realize when we start to fight, just how true are these words from Proverbs: "He that is slow to anger is better than the mighty; and he that ruleth his spirit, than he that taketh a city."

Swansea, South Wales

R. B.

Overcoming Temptation

If we do on our part, "God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it." So if temptation overpowers us, we will know that we did not do on our part.

There is so much in the world to tempt and destroy; we need the Bible for knowledge and wisdom. "For wisdom is a defence, and money is a defence: but the excellency of knowledge is, that wisdom giveth life to them that have it" (Eccl. 7:12). If we have this wisdom, we have no excuse to give in to temptation.

Covington, Georgia

L. G.

MEGIDDO MESSAGE

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

"Is God trying to save everyone right now?"

Although God does not wish that "any should perish, but that all should come to repentance," (II Pet. 3:9), and although He has no pleasure in the death of the wicked (Ezek. 18:32), He is too wise to think that He can save everyone—because everyone is not willing to meet His standards for salvation. He would like to save all, He would "have all men to be saved and to come unto the knowledge of the truth" (I Tim. 2:4), but He knows that all will not come. Even Jesus was aware of the obstinacy of human nature when He said: "...ye will not come to me, that ye might have life" (John 5:40).

Jesus foretold that when He returns to earth, the world will be in the condition it was in at the time of the Flood, or at the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah. Only few would listen, repent and be saved.

"If the New Testament policy of one wife is the best principle—and I believe it is—why was so much polygamy allowed in Old Testament times?"

Polygamy was a practice God never promoted, although neither did He condemn it in the time of the patriarchs. It seems to have been the custom of the times, that if a wife did not bear children to her husband, the husband might take another wife that he might have descendants after him. For example, the case of Sarah giving Abraham her maid for a wife. According to the Bible Dictionary, the children of such a union were reckoned as the children of the first wife by adoption and were eligible for a legal share in the father's inheritance.

The Interpreter's Bible says that through polygamy the family was preserved and enlarged. In the Hebrew family, children were considered the richest of blessings. Children were needed for the strength of the family and the tribe and the nation, so a childless woman felt disgraced. To have many children was the chief blessing she could desire. "Give me children or else I die," expresses the longing throughout Old Testament times. To the people of Israel, childlessness was the worst of calamities. To the woman it meant sorrow and humiliation. Note the affliction of Abraham and Sarah when for so many years they had no heir born of their own flesh

(Gen. 15:2, 3; 16:2). They felt that the one way they could see the beginning of the fulfillment of God's promise to Abraham was through a descendant.

In ancient Israel the strength of the nation was measured by its numbers. When the tribes were possessing the land of Canaan, numbers meant military prowess and power.

In the cases of Abraham and Jacob, polygamy seems to have been prompted by the desire for descendants. Moses, however, warned kings not to multiply wives unto themselves, hence David and Solomon were not innocent (Deut. 17:17). Later history proves that monogamy (one wife) was and is God's ideal. Note Paul's recommendation that a bishop should be the "husband of one wife" (I Tim. 3:2).

"The second coming of Christ, will it be spiritual or literal?"

The second coming of Christ will be literal. The two men in white apparel who were present at the ascension said, "Ye men of Galilee, why stand ye gazing up into heaven? this same Jesus, which is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye have seen him go into heaven" (Acts 1:11). Jesus went away literally, visibly, a corporate man, and He is to come in the same manner. The disciples saw Him go with their physical eyes, and people also will see Him literally when He returns. "Behold, he cometh with clouds; and every eye shall see him" (Rev. 1:7).

Jesus compared the visibility of His return to the vividness of lightning: "For as the lightning cometh out of the east, and shineth even unto the west; so shall also the coming of the Son of man be" (Matt. 24:27).

"In Malachi, the third chapter—'will man rob God'—who is referred to?"

The best critical thinking on the book of Malachi places its writing at about 450 B. C., shortly before the rebuilding of the wall of Jerusalem by Nehemiah. The official order by Cyrus, king of Persia, freeing the captives to return to their homeland, and commanding them to rebuild the temple of their God, is estimated to be 536 B. C. The writing of the book of Malachi at 450 B. C. would therefore be approximately 86 years later, hence the command to bring tithes into the Lord's storehouse would have been directed to the Jews who had returned from the Captivity. • •

"Quo Vadis?"

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we cannot ascend the prodigious heights on our own power.

H. G. Wells was known for his penetrating wit, but he was never more discerning than when he said: "Until a man finds God and is found of God, he begins at no beginning and comes to no ending."

I spoke to you of the friend who traveled the highways and byways of this world; who went about doing good, healing, teaching, and loving. Paradoxically, it was on that same road that He was wounded, that He suffered, and that He died. But, in so doing, *He* changed *His* world. *He* gave life meaning. *He* realized *His* life's goal. *He* showed men God. *He* became a *man*—the Son of God.

He is waiting to help *you* to change *your* world, to make *your* life meaningful, to fulfill *your* destiny.

"Quo vadis?" ● ●

*If you sit down at set of sun
And count the acts that you have done
And counting, find
One self-denying deed, one word
That eased the heart of him who heard—
One glance most kind,
That fell like sunshine where it went
Then you may count that day well spent.*

*But if, through all the livelong day
You've cheered no heart, by yea or nay;
If, through it all
You've nothing done that you can trace
That brought the sunshine of God's face—
No act most small
That helped some soul, whate'er the cost—
Then count that day as worse than lost.*

Meditations on the Word

(Continued from page 27)

by the astute prophet Nahum (2:1). Whatever our giants, whether anger, pride, deceit, self-esteem, unbelief, or the unruly tongue, if we persistently fortify against them, as certainly as David was able to strike down Goliath with a smooth pebble accurately thrown from his sling, so surely one by one these clinging evils can be banished from our lives.

David demonstrated his shrewdness in making certain his enemy was dead. Although he was down he might not be out, he might suddenly revive; so David lost no time in completely severing his head. As a safety measure this same realistic approach

must be applied to our spiritual life. Let us never be too sure of ourselves, never forget we could lose this war with self, never discount the recuperative abilities of our archenemy, flesh.

One safeguard is to build high heaps about the places where we have fallen; another, to keep as far from the precipice as possible, and never overestimate our moral strength. If there is a place where we have fallen in the past, let us not casually assure ourselves that we are stronger now, so we can take *that* temptation in our stride without damage. The divine command is: "Enter not into the path of the wicked, and go not in the way of evil men. Avoid it, pass not by it, turn from it, and pass away" (Prov. 4:14, 15).

Now let us take a lesson from Goliath's mistakes. Goliath thought himself so well protected with his armor that no weapon available to the enemy could harm him; but the final showdown proved his false security. One vital spot—the forehead—was left unprotected, and at this point the stone from David's sling did its deadly work. As soldiers of the Eternal we too must be especially careful of our armor. Unless wearing the whole armor of God we are certain to be defeated. Every piece of this armor must be kept in position at all times: truth to gird our loins, righteousness as our breastplate, the gospel as a protection for our feet, faith as our shield, the hope of salvation as our helmet, and the Word of God as our mighty sword.

David knew that the head was the one spot where a flying missile could do the most harm, and so today the darts of the evil one enter by way of the intellect. The first of the thirteen evils enumerated by the Great Teacher is "evil thoughts." And Paul wrote to the Corinthians: "I fear, lest by any means, as the serpent beguiled Eve through his subtilty, so your minds should be corrupted from the simplicity that is in Christ" (II Cor. 11:3).

Among these corrupting influences are thoughts of despair, of discouragement; sensual thoughts, memories of our former life, thoughts of self-pity; that feeling of self-importance. We may think we are denied pleasures that we should be permitted to have, may feel our work is not appreciated, that the sacrifices we have made for the Cause of Christ do not bring us the recognition they should. Every entrance to our mind must be fortified, or our enemy, self, will defeat us.

Goliath repeated his challenge daily for forty days; so the same temptations may confront us times without number. But if we always resist them, fortify mightily against them, never forgetting to pray, but earnestly imploring our Heavenly Father for strength to overcome, victory shall be ours. ● ●



Meditations

On the Word

TO US, as Christians, the account of David slaying Goliath, as given in First Samuel 17, means a great deal more than merely a thrilling episode in the history of the Israelites during the early years of their experiment as a kingdom. It marks a triumph by the powers of right over the forces of evil in a struggle that is just as real and just as much a part of our lives today as it was of the lives of the people living twenty-seven centuries ago. The Goliath always is with us, and his mastery always a problem.

The enemies of righteousness in our individual life may be even harder to fight than the champion of the Philistines, for whereas Goliath came out in the open to make his challenge to the armies of Israel, our enemy, evil desires, often works subtly and under cover, trying to hide his true identity and minimize his ability to drag us back into evil and defeat us.

Goliath defied Israel and challenged the God who championed their cause. He was a giant in stature with a long and impressive ancestry behind him, and so thought people should be afraid of him. Sin also is a giant and is backed up by at least two hundred generations of people who have defied God and righteousness, and who have said to God, "Depart from us; for we desire not the knowledge of thy ways" (Job 21:14). This giant, sin, also expects—and too often gets—recognition. Building on the precedent of his long—if shady—past record, he strives to awe us with his importance and stature.

King Saul and the Israelites lacked faith; they seemed to have forgotten the power of the eternal God. They certainly were familiar with the conquering of

the seven nations in the land of Canaan under Joshua; with the victory of Deborah and Barak, and the fate of Sisera, the captain of the armies of the Canaanites; how God had delivered the hosts of Midian into the hand of Gideon and his three hundred picked men.

Forgetting is a human weakness, a tendency that we ourselves must guard against constantly, lest in the hour of trial we too forget that the eternal God is as powerful today as in the days of yore. The flesh may be strong, the desire to give way to temptation may seem to overpower our best efforts to thwart the giant; but let us never surrender, or cry out as if horror-stricken, "The work cannot be done; the evils of my flesh cannot be conquered!" The gospel still is "the power of God unto salvation," and His guardian angels still encamp about us if we are earnestly striving to transform our lives.

To the armies of Israel the giant seemed an unbeatable foe, and so he was, as long as no one dared go boldly out and face him; but he did not last long after David bravely accepted his challenge. Yet David's success was not accidental, nor his courageous step taken without due preparation. God helps those who help themselves. David had spent hours on end practicing with sling and stone, till he

had become so expert that it is said he could strike a target no larger than a man's hand.

Likewise the most formidable foe in our lives can be conquered, but not without prayerful and earnest preparation, and much application. "Keep the munition, watch the way, make thy loins strong, fortify thy power mightily," is the success-formula given

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"Then said David to the Philistine, Thou comest to me with a sword, and with a spear, and with a shield: but I come to thee in the name of the Lord of hosts, the God of the armies of Israel, whom thou hast defied. This day will the Lord deliver thee into mine hand... that all the earth may know that there is a God in Israel" (I Sam. 17: 45, 46).

Love . . .

*Love is so patient and so kind;
Love never boils with jealousy;
It never boasts,
 is never puffed with pride;
It does not act with rudeness,
 or insist upon its rights;
It never gets provoked,
It never harbors evil thoughts;
It is never glad when wrong is done,
But always glad when truth prevails;
It bears up under anything,
It exercises faith in everything,
It keeps up hope in everything,
It gives us power to endure in anything.
Love never fails.*

—First Corinthians 13, Williams