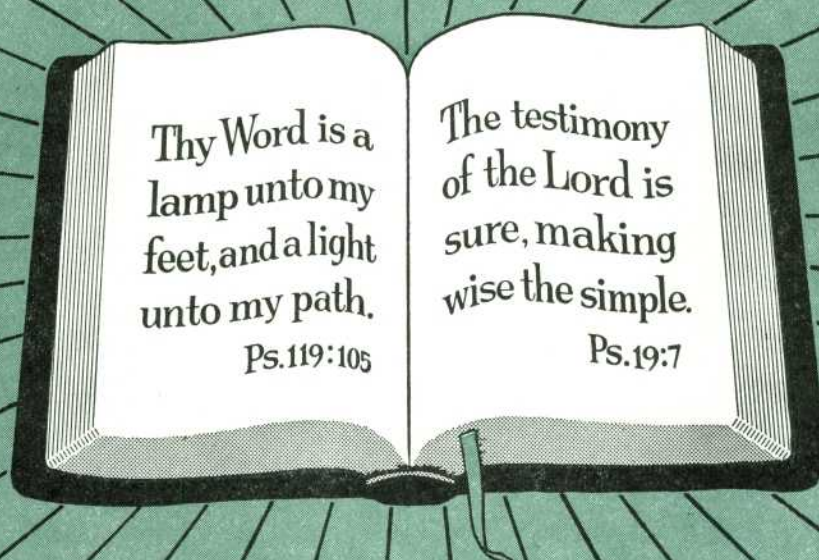


Megiddo Message

DEVOTED TO THE CAUSE OF CHRIST



Let God Be True

Obedience--Not Sacrifice

Which Translation?

Sin--Caterpillar or Butterfly?

Megiddo Message

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The MEGIDDO MESSAGE will

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Editorially Speaking . . .

Refined or Removed?

WE who profess the name of Christ might benefit from a sharp, close look at ourselves, to see exactly what our Christianity has done—and has yet to do—for us.

Our faith is our God-given weapon. Our subject for attack is sin, primarily the sin in our own lives. We have grasped the weapon, and we have attacked. But with what result?

There are two possibilities. If our attack was sufficiently strong and sustained, it is possible that a certain sin may be removed, though we will find that we must always combat the tendency to it. But there is grave danger that we may settle down to live with sins *refined* rather than *removed*.

For example, when we commit ourselves to God and the working out of His plan, we realize that we must be careful of the company we entertain. For "evil communications corrupt good manners." We shun the worst; but do we still waste precious minutes in small talk with those who are more respectable but who still have nothing in common with our higher interests?

Or we realize that we have become the representatives of God's cause on earth. As such, we must dress modestly, in a manner becoming to our high calling. We respond to the command, "And be not conformed to this world. . . ." But do we comprehend the meaning of the rest of this verse: "...but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind"? The rendering of this text in the New English Bible is even stronger: "Adapt yourselves no longer to the pattern of this present world, but let your minds be remade and your whole nature thus transformed" (Rom. 12:2). Not only our manner of attire is involved, but our whole pattern of behavior, even our very nature must be transformed. The old nature, with all its tendencies to shallow thinking, with all its goals in this present world, with all its questionable conversation and its satisfaction with the things of this life, must *go*. "Put away . . .", "put to death . . .", "throw off . . .", "lay aside . . ." are some of the terms the New Testament uses to describe the change. Sin must not merely be refined. It must be *removed*!

We must guard constantly against the possibility that our change of heart may result simply in a change of location—the same business, so to speak, but only on the other side of the street; the whole thing given a more religious appearance, but without any radical change.

It is the same temptation that confronted Saul before us—to spare the best of the cattle and the sheep. Like him we are willing enough to slay the scrubby sheep and the old sway-back steers; but the secret loves and longings of our hearts persuade us to keep the fattest beasts alive. And so we make pets of what we should have destroyed, and their bleatings and bellowings are an audible witness before God that sin is still alive in us. Our obedience is not complete.

Refining is not enough. Sin must be *removed*! ●●

Let God Be True

GOD has friends. And God has critics, little men of His creating who think they are the ultimate of a natural sequence of events which had no designer and no creating hand. Nor do they feel the overruling authority of an Omnipotent Being.

This is nothing new. Long ago the Psalmist wrote, "The fool hath said in his heart, There is no God" (Ps. 14:1). Job also described those who long to escape the power of God when he said, "They say unto God, Depart from us; for we desire not the knowledge of thy ways. What is the Almighty, that we should serve him? and what profit should we have, if we pray unto him?" (Job 21:14-15).

Belief in God and the Bible as His inspired message to men requires faith. And faith is not a tangible article which may be acquired as one would purchase a new coat. It is an attitude of mind, a disposition of will; and it must be constructed, thought by thought, upon a solid foundation of evidence. Lacking such foundation, it is sure to fall.

Where shall we go for evidence? Our world is filled with evidence, if we will but open our eyes to see. Nevertheless, the truth of the old axiom remains: There are none so blind as those who *will* not see.

A friend has written us, challenging the very foundations of our faith. His are questions which might occur to any of us; and if we would safeguard our religious superstructure, we must have our defenses ready. As long as we are mortal men and women, we shall have to keep ourselves armed for the inevitable conflicts and be ready to defend and contend for the holy "faith which was once delivered unto the saints."

Concerning God's Existence

Our friend writes:

"You say that you 'defend and demonstrate the infallibility, harmony and divine inspiration of the Bible.'

"Perhaps you would care to reply to these questions which I am posing to you:

"Religious people are always talking about a good, powerful God, but nature itself denies the existence of this God."

We answer:

Belief in God is the starting point of all faith, for if we cannot accept the existence of the Supreme Ruler or Guiding Power over the universe, we have nothing more than we can actually see and touch in our physical world; we are limited to what mortal men are able to produce.

Your first reply will no doubt be, "I have not seen God. I have not seen a single manifestation of His power. I don't believe in 'faith,' therefore I have no proof there is a God. I don't believe in God."

Now I don't believe in blind "faith" either, but I think we both believe in faith to a certain extent. For instance, if we should take a bus, we have faith that the driver knows how to operate that bus, that he will exercise reasonable caution in driving it, and that we will arrive safely at our destination. If I did not believe all this, I would never get on a bus.

When I read in the newspaper that Tokyo, Japan, is the largest city in the world, I have faith that this statement is true. But I have never been in Tokyo; I have never seen Japan. Why should I believe that nation exists? But I would be foolish *not* to believe, because I have evidence. I have seen people whose contact with Japan has been direct. I have in my possession a tape recorder which was built in Japan. I have read of people who claimed to have visited Japan, and I believe their testimony.

I never saw Thomas Jefferson. I never talked to a person who did see him; nevertheless, I believe he was one of the founders of this country. There is considerable evidence to support this belief.

Now if you and a friend should visit Williamsburg and see the old colonial capitol and you should say to your friend, "Who designed and built this beautiful old colonial building?" and he should answer "No one, it has always been here," would you believe him? Or if he should tell you that it was just the forces of nature, that the bricks and lumber just happened to come together in this shape, would you not think him rather uninformed or lacking in judgment? You would recognize the building as a work of art, and know that someone with ability designed and constructed that building: in this case, Thomas Jefferson. But how do

you know it was Thomas Jefferson? You never saw him; no one alive today ever saw him. Yet I believe we all have faith that he lived and that he was an outstanding architect who designed the building.

If you believe this building was designed and built by a guiding hand, is it less reasonable to believe that the trees from which the lumber for this building came were the result of laws placed in operation by some guiding hand or hands?

You are forced to admit that man himself, even with his many limitations, is a marvelous mechanism. And he, too, had to have a creator and designer of greater skill and power than himself.

Can you believe that the blind forces of nature just *happened* to put a man together—a man who can walk and talk and run and think and move freely about? Can you believe that Nature (whatever that is) can control the army of stars and universes we see in the heavens at night? Billions of worlds, some so huge that they would dwarf this planet.

And astronomers with more powerful telescopes are continuing to discover multitudes of planets and constellations they never before knew existed. The prophet Isaiah, quoting the word of the Lord, says, "Look up on high and see what I have created. I bring out their host by number and call them all by names by the greatness of my might" (Isa. 40: 26, Moffatt). Who or what governs nature? There must be a supreme power somewhere to control the forces of Nature. And that Supreme Power we believe to be God.

I have never seen God or heard His voice, but I see such a vast array of evidence of His works that I have faith that He exists. It is, in fact, impossible to believe otherwise.

God Creates to Kill?

"Now my second question:

"If you believe there is a god behind nature, then don't you also have to believe that god creates germs and diseases to kill people, that He makes floods, typhoons, earthquakes, tornadoes, lightning, droughts and other forces to destroy them?"

The same God who designed and created the universe set all things in order according to definite laws. Men have been centuries *discovering* these laws, to say nothing of the idea that these laws just happened, or that they were the result of man's designing.

One such law is the law of gravitation. Our world is so constructed that all objects heavier than air tend to gravitate toward the center of the earth. A stone is dropped, and it falls to the earth.

A man jumps from a sixth-floor window to his death on the pavement below. Is God to blame? Did He create the force of gravity to kill that man? God did *not*, for the same law which caused that man's death preserves life. By the same law we are able to walk and move, to rest and work. Without this law our houses would blow around as cardboard boxes, our automobiles would not stay on the road; even the oceans would not keep their proper place. We cannot condemn the law; it is only as we misuse the law that we are harmed.

Floods, typhoons, earthquakes, tornadoes, lightnings, droughts are all the result of the forces of nature, and are part of the world God created. They are natural phenomena, again resulting from the existence of definite laws. They often cause destruction, both of property and of life. But is God to blame? Do such forces give evidence that there is no intelligent design behind nature? They are the result of laws which are constantly building up and tearing down the surface of the earth. They were never designed to kill people. But when people happen to be in their path, those people suffer.

God's whole creation has purpose. Everything is set up for the fulfilling of that purpose. Ultimately God will have a perfect world, filled with happy immortals. Selecting, developing and protecting these individuals among the human family is His chief concern. Outside these individuals of specific interest, "time and chance" happen to them all (Eccl. 9:11). God has set the forces in motion, and they operate without His conscious direction. But His control is supreme, for He makes certain that nothing hinders His overruling plan.

"How can you prove that the Bible is divinely inspired?"

The majority of Bible students are generally divided into two classes: those who study the Bible with the object of trying to prove a pre-conceived theory; and those who study it with the object of proving it wrong, unreliable, and in the light of modern science purely folklore.

Both these approaches are wrong. If I thought the Bible contained the doctrines taught by the vast majority of established churches, I too would reject it as being unfit for a reasoning person to take seriously and would join the infidels. But I am sure it does *not* contain these doctrines. It is the least understood Book in the world today.

The strongest evidence for the inspiration of the Bible is found in its many prophecies which have been fulfilled. We compare a prophecy in the Bible with its fulfillment, always taking into consideration the date or approximate date when it was

made, and when it was fulfilled; and each time we find the prediction came true.

Many events were foretold years, even hundreds of years before they came to pass. This is something no mortal man is able to do with any certainty. He might hazard a guess. But it would be mere speculation at best. We cannot tell what will happen one week from today, to say nothing of one hundred, five hundred or a thousand years from today.

Here are some events which were foretold in the Bible, and both secular history and the Bible confirm their fulfillment.

The Lord gave Nebuchadnezzar, King of Babylon, a dream, which was interpreted by Daniel the prophet, as recorded in Daniel, chapter 2. He saw in his dream the rise of four world kingdoms, each with particular identifying features. Each arose, and each fell, as Nebuchadnezzar's dream foretold and as history amply confirms. Nebuchadnezzar himself was part of the first kingdom, Babylon, which fell to Cyrus the Persian in about 538 B. C. About 330 B. C. the Persian Empire passed into history, and the reign of the Greeks began. The Greeks, in turn, were conquered by the Romans. The Roman Empire lasted until 476 A. D., when it was overrun by foreigners.

No mortal man living in the sixth century B. C. could possibly have foretold the rise and fall of those four kingdoms in exactly the order in which they occurred. Only a Supreme Being could accomplish that feat. This is evidence which cannot be denied. The only possible way to discredit it is to say that Daniel could have lived after the beginning of the Roman Empire instead of during the Babylonian. But this premise can be disproved on two points:

One: Daniel was made a governor in the government of Nebuchadnezzar, the time of whose reign can be ascertained from secular history.

Two: Daniel also prophesied that there never would be a fifth world kingdom on earth until the coming of Christ and the setting up of His kingdom. Up to the present time, this prophecy remains accurate. Neither Napoleon nor Hitler nor the Soviet Union has been able to manage it. And man never will. It is the Word of the Lord.

The prophet Isaiah made a very accurate prophecy concerning Jesus Christ in the seventh chapter. This prophecy was spoken about eight centuries before the Christ was born. It would be very difficult to take the position that Christ never lived, as there is an abundance of secular testimony to His earthly life. It would be likewise difficult to say that Isaiah lived after Christ, for his life and

his prophecies are associated with the records of the kings of Israel and Judah. And the kings of those nations appear in both sacred and secular literature of that time.

One more prophecy which can be checked quite accurately and easily with secular history is the prediction of Jesus Himself concerning the destruction of Jerusalem (Matt. 24:21). Jesus foretold the destruction about A. D. 30-32, and the destruction took place around A. D. 70. Referring to the temple, Jesus said that there should "not be left one stone upon another, that shall not be thrown down" (Matt. 24:2); and history records that this actually happened. The Romans, in their search for gold, actually took apart the individual stones in order to remove the gold that might be between them. We could say that Matthew wrote this prophecy after Jerusalem had fallen, but this would not be factual, for the evidence points to a writing date around 45-60 A. D., though the exact date is not known. Furthermore, Matthew's other references to the Jewish people and the city of Jerusalem show definitely that the city had not fallen nor the nation been dispersed at the time he was writing (see Matt. 27:8; 28:15).

"If the Bible and the Christian religion are divinely inspired, why are there other holy books and other religions? Some people claim that the Bible is inspired because it has remained with us since it was written. Well, the Koran, the holy book of Islam, has also remained with us since it was written. Does this show that the Koran is divinely inspired, too?"

"It would seem that the diversity of religion shows none is divinely inspired, which brings to mind the old saying that superstition is always the other fellow's religion."

The fact that the Bible is one among other religious books does nothing to lessen its worth or disprove its authority. Does the existence of counterfeit money mean that the real thing has no value?

The preservation of the Bible through so many centuries cannot stand alone as evidence that it is inspired, though it does contribute. For its survival is indeed remarkable, when we consider the opposition it had and the unique methods by which it was preserved. No other ancient book survives today with such an abundance of confirmation of its accuracy.

But your comparison of the Bible to the Koran is not a strong argument. The author of the Koran, Mohammed, lived during the seventh century A. D., and much of the Bible was written some two mil-

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NOT SACRIFICE, BUT

OBEDIENCE

A Lesson From Jeremiah 7

IT is a time of crisis. Fear, ghastly fear surges through the land of Judah. What will happen next? Josiah has fallen, and with him his dream of a new kingdom of David free from corroding foreign influence and foreign domination. Security and confidence are nil as Jehoiakim, son of Josiah, reigns on a trembling throne.

Whither should the people turn in times like these? To the temple, the temple, the temple of the Lord!

And so "all . . . Judah" has gathered to the temple of the Lord in Jerusalem, seeking its protection.

But hearken! A prophet is speaking! It is the bold and dauntless Jeremiah. With all the unflinching courage of a God-appointed minister he stands in the gate of the Lord's house and proclaims this word: "Hear the word of the Lord, all ye of Judah, that enter in at these gates to worship the Lord" (Jer. 7:1-2). Long enough have you sought the Lord in your own way, he says; now it is time to listen.

The Prophet then delivers a scathing attack on the idea that God can be satisfied by just any sort of temple worship or ritual sacrifice they may choose to offer. "Thus saith the Lord of hosts, the God of Israel, Amend your ways and your doings, and I will cause you to dwell in this place" (7:3). Yes, he says, you may dwell in this place if—if you amend your ways and your doings.

Jeremiah proceeds to expose their vain reliance on magic incantations, as though the mere repetition of words could assure their safety. "Trust ye not in lying words, saying, The temple of the Lord, The temple of the Lord, The temple of the Lord" (7:4). It is vain! It is worthless. Nothing short of a radical change of your own hearts and lives can assure you any real safety. Only "if ye thoroughly amend your ways and your doings; if ye thoroughly execute judgment between a man and his neighbour, . . . then will I cause you to dwell in this place, in the land that I gave to your fathers, for

ever and ever" (vs. 5-7). Only when you amend your lives, he says, by practicing sound moral virtue and righteousness will you find safety in the Lord.

The Prophet continues his rebuke: "Will ye steal, murder, and commit adultery, and swear falsely and burn incense unto Baal, and walk after other gods, whom ye know not"—these were fundamentals of their original law back in the days when Moses was leading their ancestors. "Will ye . . . walk after other gods, whom ye know not; and come and stand before me in this house, which is called by my name, and say, We are delivered to do all these abominations?" How can you go about breaking My commandments, and then come and stand before Me in this house and cry, "We are delivered"? It is incredible, says the Lord. It is abominable!

And for committing such abominations as these—the Prophet waxes bolder as he prepares to announce the curse which the Lord will bring upon them for their evil deeds; prophets of doom were never popular, and words such as Jeremiah was commissioned to speak were sure to arouse bitter, even violent, opposition from this seething mass of dissatisfied Israelites. "And now, because ye have done all these words, saith the Lord, . . . I will cast you out of my sight, as I have cast out all your brethren [the people of Israel]." I did it to them, says the Lord, and I will do it again—unless you amend your ways and your doings.

But Jeremiah is not through. Again he delivers a sledge-hammer blow as he utters more words from the Lord: "Put your burnt offerings unto your sacrifices, and eat flesh" (v. 21). The Prophet is setting the voice of God, together with His justice, righteousness, and mercy, over against the flagrantly abused system of sacrifice and priesthood. Under the law of Moses, the burnt offerings were entirely consumed on the altar, while many other types of sacrifices were eaten in part by the

worshippers. Jeremiah is saying that so far as the Lord is concerned, they may as well eat their burnt offerings as they do the other sacrifices. Heap up your burnt offerings as high as you like, he says, both those that are meant to be eaten and those that are not, and eat them all. It is a matter of indifference to the Lord, for in His sight they are all mere flesh—meaningless.

Sacrifices offered in so disobedient a manner were never part of His covenant with Israel, nor were they ever commanded. Jeremiah continues: "For I spake not unto your fathers, nor commanded them in the day that I brought them out of the land of Egypt, concerning burnt offerings or sacrifices" (vs. 21-22).

At face value, these words might suggest to us that either Jeremiah was ignorant of the priestly code (which is impossible, as he was born into a family of priests—see Jer. 1:1), or that the priestly code had ceased before his time (which is also untrue, as sacrifices were offered even after the days of the Exile).

It is very possible that Jeremiah did not intend these words to be taken literally. He was addressing people who had utterly disregarded the moral and spiritual demands of the law of God and were adhering solely to a meaningless ritual of sacrifice. He is stressing the point which the prophet Hosea affirms when he says, "I desire steadfast love and not sacrifice, the knowledge of God, rather than burnt offerings" (Hos. 6:6, RSV). Hosea is not saying that sacrifice in itself is sinful, but that love, knowledge and obedience are fundamental with God, and that sacrifice is not an acceptable substitute. The prophet Samuel years earlier had delivered the same weighty message to the disobedient King Saul: "To obey is better than sacrifice, and to hearken than the fat of rams" (I Sam. 15:22).

The message of the prophet Micah was the same: "Wherewith shall I come before the Lord, and bow myself before the high God? shall I come before him with burnt offerings, with calves of a year old? Will the Lord be pleased with thousands of rams, or with ten thousands of rivers of oil?" And the answer is definite: God values virtue above sacrifice, and mercy above multiplied offerings. "What doth the Lord require of thee, but to do justly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God" (Mic. 6:6-8).

Through ages of dealings with His human family, the Almighty has had one unalterable standard: obedience. Whatever their ideas, interests, or ambitions, the first duty of His children was to obey; all else was secondary. "What thing soever I com-

mand you, observe to do it"; the divine injunction allowed no wavering.

And "what thing soever" usually involved some form of sacrifice. For Abel it meant "the firstlings of his flock and the fat thereof" (Gen. 4:3); for Cain it was "the fruit of the ground." For Abraham it meant departure from his homeland, sojourning in a strange land, and later sacrificing his most precious possession—his son of promise. For the children of Israel, "what thing soever" meant the best of their flocks and herds, and the firstfruits of all their increase.

But in all cases it was not the sacrifice itself but *the act of obedience* that found favor in the eyes of the Lord. In the supreme test of yielding his only son Isaac, Abraham was commended not for an acceptable sacrifice but for his obedience—the angel's blessing was specific: "In thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed; because thou hast obeyed my voice" (Gen. 22:18). And his name shines among the illustrious list of saints because "By faith Abraham obeyed" (Heb. 11:8).

As the sacrificial system was set up in ancient Israel, it provided a visible means of active, open, sincere and meaningful worship. To the instructed, it signified the complete surrender of the individual man or woman to the will of God. But as both priest and layman forsook the laws of God and rebelled against His mandates, continued diligence in offering sacrifice upon His altar became meaningless—and worse. Nothing could be stronger than the denunciation of the prophet Amos: "I hate, I despise your feast days, and I will not smell in your solemn assemblies. Though ye offer me burnt offerings and meat offerings, I will not accept them, neither will I regard the peace offerings of your fat beasts. . . . Have ye offered unto me sacrifices and offerings in the wilderness forty years, O house of Israel? But ye have borne the tabernacle of your Molech and Chiun, your images, the star of your god, which ye made to yourselves. Therefore will I cause you to go into captivity" (Amos 5:21-27).

Jeremiah's message is parallel. God's one demand is obedience. The people's immorality, idolatry and wickedness nullifies completely any possible good effects of their sacrifices to the Lord. By their disobedience, they are rejecting God; and anything they may choose to do for Him is unacceptable. Sacrifices are irrelevant, even idolatrous and abominable. What God must have is *obedience*. Jeremiah states this fact plainly (verse 23): "But this thing commanded I them, saying, Obey my voice, and I will be your God, and ye shall be my

(Continued on page 24)

In Such An Age!

To be alive in such an age!
With every year a lightning page
Turned in the world's great wonder book
Whereon the leaning nations look,
When men speak strong for brotherhood,
For peace and universal good,
When miracles are everywhere,
And every inch of common air
Throbs a tremendous prophecy
Of greater marvels yet to be.

O thrilling age,
O willing age!

When steel and stone and rail and rod
Become the avenue of God—
A trump to shout His thunder through
To crown the work that He shall do.

To be alive in such an age!
When man, impatient of his cage,
Thrills to the soul's relentless rage
For conquest—reaches goal on goal,
Travels the earth from pole to pole,
Garners the tempests and the tides
And on a dream triumphant rides.
When, hid within the lump of clay,
A light more glorious than day
Proclaims the presence of that Force
Which hurls the planets on their course.

O age with wings
O age that flings

A challenge to the very sky,
Where endless realms of conquest lie!
When earth on tiptoe strives to hear
The message of a sister sphere,
Yearning to reach the cosmic wires
That flash Infinity's desires.

To be alive in such an age!
That blunders forth its discontent
With futile creed and sacrament,
Yet craves to utter God's intent;
Seeing beneath the world's unrest
Creation's huge, untiring quest,
And through Tradition's broken crust
The flame of Truth's triumphant thrust;
Below the seething thought of man
The push of a stupendous Plan.

O age of strife!
O age of life!

When Progress rides her chariots high,
And on the borders of the sky
The signals of the century
Proclaim the things that are to be—
The fall of nations from their place,
The coming of a nobler race.

To be alive in such an age—

To live in it,
To give to it!

Rise, soul, from thy despairing knees,
See what thy Lord in heaven sees.
Fling forth thy sorrows to the wind
And link thy hope with God's own mind!
The passion of a larger claim
Will put thy puny grief to shame.
Breathe heaven's thought, do heaven's deed,
Thy King is almost here—take heed!
And what thy woe, and what thy weal?
Look to the work the times reveal!
Give thanks with all thy flaming heart—
Crave but to have in it a part.
Give thanks and clasp thy heritage—
To be alive in such an age!

Sel. and alt.

Clean-through the Word

PHYSICAL or material cleanliness is a necessity; heart cleanliness is a mark of divinity.

The Psalmist sought for help to attain mental purity. "Wash me thoroughly from mine iniquity, and cleanse me from my sin. . . . Purge me with hyssop, and I shall be clean: wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow. . . . Create in me a clean heart, O God; and renew a right spirit within me" (Ps. 51:2, 7, 10). David sought for purity from the Source of all purity. He wanted a "clean heart."

This was the cleanliness of which our Master spoke—a cleansing without, but especially a cleansing within, a cleansing of motives, purposes, thoughts, feelings, words, actions. This is a cleansing made possible only through the words of life, which Jesus spoke. During His ministry He proclaimed the law of faith which He exemplified in His life. It was this same law of purity of which we read in Psalm 19:8-9, "The commandment of the Lord is pure, . . . The fear of the Lord is clean." This "fear of the Lord" is "to hate evil" (Prov. 8:13), to despise uncleanness in all its forms, even when it is present in ourselves.

To be pure we must "cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh" (II Cor. 7:1). But a person has to be motivated to this action; he has to have the inner desire; he has to *want* to become pure. There is no task more hopeless than trying to help a man who thinks he doesn't need any help. You may throw a blanket over a horse's head and lead it out of a burning stable, or a lasso over a steer's head to get it where you want it to go; but human beings cannot be handled that way. They must be led; but they must be willing to move themselves. The tether that draws must be fastened inside their will.

When a man is too impure in his ingrained ideas to receive any conception of what purity means, there is little possibility of helping him to become clean. When he is content in the gutter, when his eyes cannot be lifted over the curbstone, how is he ever to rise to the highlands? A man never turns from sin until he is sickened by its filth and villainess. Uncleanness of mind cannot be daubed over, whitewashed, patched up or mended. It must be cleansed "by the washing of water by the word" (Eph. 5:26).

August, 1975

Uncleanness of the inner man may not always be visible, but it leaves its stain upon the soul.

Stagnant pools harbor filth and foulness. Without this vital purifier—the water of life—coursing through our minds, we, too, are stagnant, with an unhealthy mental state. Alas, our minds are easily clogged by the rubbish with which we too often load our memories. Petty jealousies, envy, foolish memories, evil imaginations, conceit, self-love, sensual thoughts—how easily they absorb our thinking power.

How can the pure, fresh water of life flow through our lives if we allow an accumulation of the filthiness of the flesh, the things of this earth, to clutter our minds? That is why the Lord commands, "Wash thine heart from wickedness, that thou mayest be saved." This purifying, purging, filtering, cleansing process must continue in every part of us until God pronounces us "clean." It is a gradual process; slowly as the filth is washed away we come to appreciate the "beauty of holiness." Our sensitivity to sin becomes keener; our lives become deeper and closer to the Author of holiness.

The apostles were attracted to this selfless purity by the perfect example of their Master, which they were privileged to witness. Here was a man whose every word and act was powerful. In His word was a cleansing force, a purifying power. Strength and sincerity marked His actions. To be near Him was to feel in themselves the same vitalizing faith and hope which flowed through His veins. To hear Him speak was to fill their own hearts with insatiable longings to grasp and retain the ultimate—His standard of holiness. To observe His meekness and humility as He lived and worked among men was to strike condemnation to the self-seekers. To see His fearlessness in denouncing self-righteousness and hypocrisy was to provoke a deep thoughtfulness and the soul-searching, "Lord, is it I?" Here was the cleansing process at its working best.

In no less powerful form do the Master's words speak to us across the centuries: "Now ye are clean through the word which I have spoken unto you."

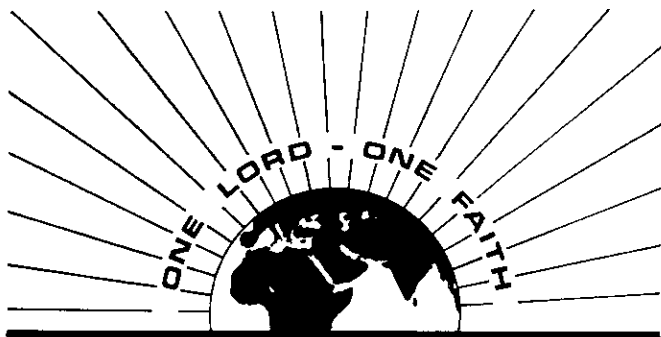
Who? "Ye."

What? "Are clean."

When? "Now."

How? "Through the word which I have spoken unto you."

Jesus has given the formula. It is our part to put it to use in our own lives by living according to the words He spoke. Then we, too, may feel the joy that comes to those who are clean and ultimately share in the promised salvation. ●●



Christ--More About Him

If you have heard anything about Christianity, you have heard about Christ, its center and all-important Prophet. All over the Christian world Christ is worshiped as the divine Son of God, the second Person of the Trinity, who came down from heaven to be born and live and die among men, God in human flesh.

But is this all true? Can we depend on it? Why, or why not? We must be able to defend our every religious belief by the Word God has written for our learning, the Bible. For in it is revealed all that God would have us know.

Since Christ is so important in the plan of God, we need to be very sure we have a correct understanding of Him, His nature, His work, and His destiny. Especially are we concerned with His role in the future of God's plan, as that part of the plan may involve us.

We would not think of discrediting Christ and His tremendous accomplishments. But neither can we permit ourselves to worship Him as God in human flesh. Why? Because the Bible does not once say that Jesus was the Almighty God and Creator of heaven and earth. This idea was added by men during the early centuries, who wanted a God to extol and worship rather than an Example to pattern their lives after, as God had intended.

WHEN the heavenly Father laid His plans for the earth and its people, He centered the plan around one person who should be born about midway between the beginning of the work and the time of its completion. This central person was to be His own Son, Christ.

What kind of person was this Christ?

Contrary to popular belief, the Bible tells us that Christ was mortal, human, a man like you and me. His mother was the Virgin Mary; Joseph was Mary's husband, but he was not the father of Je-

sus. The Bible tells us Jesus was conceived miraculously by the power of the Holy Spirit (Luke 1:35). For this reason He was literally the Son of God, a title which He bore all during His earthly career and still bears today.

Christ was a human child, born "when the fullness of time had come," "made of a woman, made under the law" (Gal. 4:4). Through His mother Mary He was a direct descendant of the family of David, just as had been prophesied (Acts 2:30). His nature was like ours, for "in all things" He was "made like unto his brethren, that he might be a merciful and faithful high priest in things pertaining to God" (Heb. 2:16).

The years between His birth and the time when He went out into His public ministry (thirty years later) were years of preparation, of learning, of character-molding. The Bible describes them all in one short verse: "And Jesus increased in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and man" (Luke 2:52).

As any other child, Jesus had to grow and develop physically. At the same time He had to learn the multitude of things which every child must learn, the basics of life and survival. But most important, He had to learn the ways of His heavenly Father, and what was expected of Him as the Son. He had no automatic built-in mechanism for telling right from wrong. He had to learn by exercising the abilities God had given Him. He had to learn "obedience by the things which he suffered" (Heb. 5:8). He had to learn to refuse the evil and choose the good, just as the Prophet had said He would (Isa. 7:15).

During those first thirty years only one incident was recorded for our learning—and that incident shows Jesus to have been a very normal human being. He was twelve years old, and had gone up to Jerusalem with His parents to attend the Jewish feast. Apparently it was the custom for families to travel in large groups; and "when they had fulfilled the days, as they returned, the child Jesus tarried behind in Jerusalem; and Joseph and his mother knew not of it." They traveled on, "supposing he was in the caravan"—until they discovered He was not.

Why did He tarry in the temple? Because He felt it was time for Him to, as He put it, "be about my Father's business." He had tarried, discussing the law and the prophets with the learned rabbis at the temple. But He was mistaken. The time had not yet come, nor would it come for another eighteen years. There were yet more lessons to be learned, more quiet years to be spent in the ordinary circle of home and family tasks.

It was these quiet years that made Jesus our perfect pattern, years which He spent carefully developing those virtues which were so evident and such a part of Him during His eventful ministry. For virtue is not the product of a moment's testing. It grows through the steady discipline of daily life.

Outstanding among Jesus' virtues, which are a pattern to us, are the following:

Obedience to His Father's Will

Jesus could say, "I do always those things that please him [the Father]" (John 8:29). He was "obedient unto death, even the death of the cross" (Phil. 2:8). "Father," He entreated, "if thou be willing, remove this cup from me: nevertheless not my will, but thine, be done." He was yielding the ultimate in obedience.

Sublime Faith in God

There was no doubt in Jesus' thought or teaching; He *knew* God was His Father, and that His Father had commissioned Him to teach; He *knew* God would carry out His purposes; He *knew* God heard Him when He prayed—Jesus even thanked God for hearing Him on one occasion when there had as yet been not the slightest evidence that God had heard (see John 11:41), and could say, "I knew that thou hearest me always" (John 11:42). This same faith made Him fearless in the face of death, being certain that God would restore Him again to life as He had promised.

Fearless Courage

Jesus had the courage to speak the truth even when He knew He would have to suffer the consequences. The proud scribes and Pharisees hated Him because He told them the truth—that they were hypocrites and men-pleasers, rather than the pious God-fearers they wanted men to think they were. Even when He was tried before the Jewish council, He fearlessly made known that He was a King—"to this end was I born, and for this cause came I into the world, that I should bear witness unto the truth" (John 18:37).

Forgiveness

Jesus manifested the greatest spirit of forgiveness that is possible for a human being to develop. It is a spirit which comes from viewing the world and all that happens as part of the plan of God, and seeing God as supreme throughout. Only with such a view can the events of life be seen in their proper perspective.

So forgiving was Jesus that He could say of those who were preparing to crucify Him, "Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do" (Luke 23:34).

Jesus' years of preparation culminated in a short three-year ministry of preaching, teaching and healing, as He "went throughout every city and village, preaching and showing the glad tidings of the kingdom of God" (Luke 8:1).

Jesus' entire ministry was outstanding. Matthew records that "the people were astonished at his doctrine: for he taught them as one having authority, and not as the scribes" (Matt. 7:28-29). Luke tells us people "wondered at the gracious words which proceeded out of his mouth" (Luke 4:22). Again, "there went out a fame of him through all the region round about. And he taught in their synagogues, being glorified of all" (Luke 4:15). John also noted the reaction of the people, recording the words of the officers who were supposed to be arresting Him: "Never man spake like this man" (John 7:46).

Jesus' ministry method was unique. His style was informal, and His message always pointed. He knew how to command the attention of His hearers by drawing vital lessons of life from their very surroundings—planting and harvesting a crop, cleaning a house, baking bread, buying and selling, the relationship of husbandmen and stewards, festivals and entertainments—all were well-known settings to His hearers. He used these illustrations as the subject for His chief instruments in teaching: parables.

A parable is sometimes defined as "a heavenly story with an earthly meaning." It is a simple illustration of a deep, abstract truth which becomes more meaningful the more it is understood and absorbed.

Jesus' use of parables was so extensive that it is written, "All these things spake Jesus unto the multitude in parables; and without a parable spake he not unto them" (Matt. 13:34). On occasion He spoke to the multitude in parable and then explained privately to His disciples the deeper meaning of His words.

The central theme of most of Jesus' teaching was the Kingdom of God, including many lessons on preparation and the various aspects of man's duty before God. Frequently He emphasized the fact that He was sent of God and that He Himself was part of the plan of God, even the future King of the earth.

The urgency of Jesus' message may be summarized in one word which still comes down to us: "Repent." In other words, change your life. Stop doing that which God calls wrong and give yourself to doing what is right. Pattern your life after Jesus, and so be able to look forward to the day when you will be able to live in His Kingdom.●●

Two Willing Workers

BRUCE leaned against the porch railing with a grunt of satisfaction. At his elbow sat an old tin can half filled with big fat angle worms. He certainly had killed two birds with one stone *this* time. He had not only weeded Mother's flower garden, but had dug enough worms for tomorrow's fishing trip.

He could picture himself sitting in the shade of the big willow tree down by the old fishing hole, with a nice pile of fish on the grass at his side and another fish fighting at the end of his line. Bruce's father and grandfather had spent many happy hours fishing there when they were young, and the place had lost none of its charm for Bruce.

He didn't care about going fishing alone, though. He would call John to see if he could go too. Together they could make wonderful plans. Bruce just hoped nothing would come in to spoil them.

Thus thinking, Bruce stepped back to give the flower bed one more critical glance before Mother came out. He didn't want her to find any weeds—and perhaps keep him home tomorrow to weed it over again!

Just then Mother came out. Her smile of approval told Bruce the work was well done. As she turned to go into the house, she noticed the can of worms by the rail. "Those are my worms to go fishing tomorrow," he explained, "if it's all right." He looked inquiringly at her.

Mother thought for a moment. "I would so like to let you go, Bruce, but I'm afraid I need your help to clean all these porch windows."

Somehow Bruce managed a faint smile, but when Mother was gone, he sat down and looked dejectedly at his can of fat worms. "Why does a boy have to stay home and clean dirty old windows, when the weather is just perfect and all the big ones will be biting?" he muttered to himself. "Well, I'll put this can in the shade on the other side of the house. Maybe I can go soon."

As he passed under the kitchen window, he heard Mother talking to Grandma. "I feel so bad not to be able to let Bruce go fishing, he wants to go so much. But the doctor says I must take more rest

if I am to get well. Bruce is such a good helper. I don't know what I would do without him."

Bruce heard no more. He hurried around the house. He felt so ashamed of himself. He thought of the many kind things his mother did for him every day. Mother was never too tired to sew buttons on when he pulled on them too hard, or mend his clothes, or wash and iron them every week. Mother was never too busy to cook their meals, although he knew sometimes she was very, very tired.

Yes, he would go over and tell John that he would not be going fishing tomorrow. Instead he would get up early in the morning and surprise Mother by having a good start on the windows when she came down to get breakfast.

Hurrying across the field, he was surprised to meet John with his hands pushed deep in his pockets, looking as if he had lost his last friend.

"John, I was on my way over to your house to tell you that I am not going fishing tomorrow," he said, surmising from John's sullen face that he had the same news to tell him.

"You can't?" asked John in surprise. "Then how are you going to spend the day?"

"Mother asked me to clean windows tomorrow, and I didn't feel very happy about it at first," admitted Bruce. "But when I thought of all the things she does for me every day, I felt very much ashamed."

"Oh!" said John thoughtfully, as he ran his fingers through his red hair, standing it up like a haystack. "Maybe I could help my mother, too. There is just nothing she would not do for me. I'm going right home and see what I can do to help."

The next evening, the two boys met again and rehearsed the day's activities. Both were happy. "Let's do it again," suggested John. Helping at home was real fun—just as much as catching the biggest fish in the old fishing hole. ●●

For Strength

This is my prayer to Thee, my Lord,
Strike, strike at the root of evil in my heart.
Give me the strength lightly to bear my joys and sorrows.
Give me the strength never to disown Thy meek,
Nor bend my knees before man's insolent might.
Give me the strength to raise my mind high above daily trifles,
And give me strength to surrender my strength to Thy will—with love.

MEGIDDO MESSAGE

UNDERSTANDING THE BIBLE

"Study to shew thyself approved unto God."

World Religions

"**A**M I going to Heaven?" asks a tract circulated by an independent Baptist Church. It is a question that has been pondered by the average church-goer throughout many generations—and answered affirmatively by the average pastor.

But are **you** going to heaven? Am **I** going to heaven? Can **anyone** expect to go to heaven? The idea of "going to heaven" has been handed down from generation to generation as gospel truth for centuries—but does that make it true?

Henry Ward Beecher is quoted as having said that "that which comforts must be accepted as truth." Such a statement is itself an **untruth**. Nothing can be accepted as truth that will not stand the test of "Prove all things."

Will the belief in going to heaven stand the test? We will examine this and other widely accepted beliefs of nominal Christianity in this lesson.

VII. CHRISTIANITY

In our last issue we covered briefly the history of Christianity. We learned that originally the Christian Church was reared upon the foundation of "the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner stone." But it was not long before belief in sound doctrine began to dwindle; and the acceptance of man-made doctrines has increased until today's Christian Church bears little resemblance to the Apostolic Church.

We have found that such doctrines as Original Sin, Christ's Redemptive Death, the Trinity, the Two Natures of Christ, and God's Unmerited Favor or Grace all fall into the category of the "doctrines of men."

We will continue our study of other accepted doctrines, comparing them with the foundation of the solid rock, the Word of God.

B. Basic Doctrines of Theology

The so-called Christian Church today is divided
August, 1975

into two schools of thought, fundamental and liberal. Fundamentalists generally follow a more literal approach to Scriptural interpretation and doctrine, while liberals and modernists allow considerable latitude. Their basic doctrines, however, are much the same. We will consider a few of them.

1. The Holy Spirit—the third person of the Trinity. The interpretation of the Holy Spirit as a person finds its roots in the words of Jesus in His discourse after the Last Supper. On this occasion, Jesus was telling His disciples that He would send them the power of the Holy Spirit. Several times in our Common Version the Holy Spirit is referred to as "he," but in several newer translations the personal pronoun is replaced by "it," which is more correct.

According to theology, "When we speak of the Holy Spirit, we refer, not to a vague essence, a world soul, a nebulous power, or a divine emanation, but specifically and distinctly to the third person of the triune Godhead."*

A detailed study of the Holy Spirit as understood by theology draws these conclusions: "The Holy Spirit is everywhere regarded as God; He is God in distinction from the Father and the Son; His deity does not infringe upon the divine unity. In other words, the Holy Spirit is the third person of the triune Godhead. This finds expression in three articles of the Creed: I believe in God the Father... and in Jesus Christ... and in the Holy Ghost. It is also illustrated in the early practice of threefold immersion at baptism in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost."*

This is a broad statement without Scriptural support. The Holy Spirit is not God, but the **power** of God. God made His power, or Spirit known long before Pentecost. Sometimes it was physical strength imparted to a man beyond what he would naturally be capable of, as in the case of Elijah running before the chariot of Ahab; sometimes the power was mental as with Daniel interpreting dreams. Kings were directed toward the proper course of

* *Fundamentals of the Faith*, edited by C. F. H. Henry, pp. 146, 148.

action by the same Spirit of God and the prophets were endowed with superknowledge to forecast future events. **In no instance where we read of the Spirit of God coming upon a man do we find any indication of a person involved other than the recipient. Nowhere is the Holy Spirit defined as "the third person of the Trinity."**

All the many miracles that were done during the Exodus from Egypt were done by the power of Spirit of God working in men, through men, and for men. And in New Testament times, it was the same power which enabled Joseph to flee into Egypt to escape the wrath of Herod when Jesus was but a child. The same miraculous power of God saved Jesus from being "cast...down headlong" over a cliff by the disapproving mob and also fed the multitude with five loaves and a few fishes.

Theology fails to differentiate between the Holy Spirit and the Spirit of Truth in Jesus' discourse. Jesus did promise the Holy Spirit to His disciples and that promise was fulfilled at Pentecost. But He also promised them "another Comforter," that would "abide with [them] for ever; even the Spirit of truth" (John 14:16-17). This "comforter," rendered as "Advocate," in newer translations, meaning "supporter," or "helper," is the "Spirit of Truth," God's Word, a vital part of God's plan for this earth. It was to abide forever; the Holy Spirit was to be limited to the Apostolic Age. The Spirit by which we are to be guided today is the Spirit of Truth, the Word of God, the Spirit of which Jesus spoke in John 6:63; "The spirit alone gives life; the flesh is of no avail; the words which I have spoken to you are both spirit and life" (New English Bible).

The "Creed" quoted as giving expression to the Holy Spirit as the third person of the Trinity cannot be accepted as authority since it is no part of Scripture. It is known as the "Apostle's Creed," but this creed was not formulated until several centuries after the death of the last apostle.

2. The Pre-Existence of Christ. The theory of the pre-existence of Christ is tied to the whole system of theology. While there are verses in the Bible that would lead one to believe that Christ had some sort of existence centuries before His birth, the whole tenor of the Bible, as well as our reason, shows this to be an impossibility.

According to theology, "the historical Jesus of the New Testament is He of whom the prophets spake, the Ancient of Days, known to Abraham and Isaac and Jacob, the 'Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the ending,... which was, which is to come, the Almighty.'" Jesus is thought to be "the same Lord who spoke to Moses on the mountain,"

the one who supposedly humbled Himself to take on a human form and left the courts of everlasting glory to be born of a Jewish virgin. He is accepted as being the Creator, the One who gave life, who "stretched out the heavens with His finger," the same Being that commanded, "Let there be light." "Jesus affirmed that His own coming and His redeeming works were in fulfillment of the Scriptures; that He was that same God who had said, 'Look unto me, and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth: for I am God, and there is none else'" (Isa 45:22).**

We hold that such a teaching is neither reasonable nor Scriptural. Jesus was the Son of God, **not God**. The title "Son of God" is applied to Him more than 50 times in the New Testament, and the voice from heaven after the transfiguration said, "This is my beloved Son" (Matt. 17:5), distinguishing Him from His Father. Many times He spoke of His Father, indicating a Being separate and distinct from Himself.

There is nothing in the Scripture to indicate that Jesus possessed other than a human nature. The phrase "God incarnate" has been created by man; it cannot be found nor supported in the Scriptures. A thorough study of the Scriptures proves that the doctrine of the pre-existence of Christ is but a doctrine of men.

3. Man's immortal soul. It is generally agreed by all denominations that mortal man possesses an immortal soul, an indescribable "something" that leaves the body when a man dies and wings its way to heaven.

Belief in life after death dates back to the beginning of civilization, more a product of wishful thinking than fact. Man has the "ineradicable conviction that he survives death. In spite of death's inevitability and seeming finality, man knows he is deathless. Belief in survival after death is not only universal but very ancient. The Egyptians held it; in Greece it was adopted by the Orphics, from whom Plato received it; the Hebrews accepted it; Jews in Christ's day held it; Christianity has always believed it; and for primitive man, too, immortality was a certainty, not a conjecture. Survival after death was how man interpreted the ineradicable intuition rooted in the imperishable core of his being." **

The writer agrees that there is no scientific proof of life after death, and that some reject the idea of a soul that survives the body. Yet he and nearly all Christendom argues in favor of the immortal soul.

** *Fundamentals of the Faith*, edited by C. F. H. Henry, pp. 123, 133.

a. What is a "soul"? Contrary to the generally accepted belief, man does not possess a soul; **he IS a soul. The soul is the whole living person:** "seventy souls" went to Egypt with Jacob (Ex. 1:5); "eight souls" were saved in the ark—not eight "nothings" separate from bodies, but eight individuals; Paul was among 276 "souls" who survived a shipwreck.

"Souls" also die: "The soul that sinneth, it shall die" (Ezek. 18:20). These words of the Prophet prove that souls die. We do not doubt that many in all ages have believed that the soul survived the body, but it is contrary to the Scriptures and contradicts reason. Peter, one of the Twelve, speaking of Christ, said, "And anyone who refuses to listen to that prophet must be extirpated from Israel" (Acts 3:23, NEB). **Extirpated** means "rooted out or up; destroyed wholly, exterminated." It leaves no room for an immortal, undying soul. Peter knew nothing of such a doctrine; it is clearly not taught in the Scriptures, hence formed no part of the doctrine of the early Church nor has it any part in the doctrine of the true Church today.

4. **Man's ultimate destiny—heaven or hell.** Ask the average church member where he expects to spend eternity and he will answer, Heaven. Were you to ask more specifically what heaven meant, you would probably get an evasive answer. **Heaven** is defined in the dictionary as the place "where virtuous souls receive eternal reward after death, especially in the Christian and Islamic religions." Few would ever admit that they didn't expect to make it, but believe that those who fail expect to end up in a place known as **hell**. Hell is defined as "the abode of the dead or the place of punishment for the wicked after death."

A twentieth century minister writes concerning hell: "Hell is the sinful self existing in separation from God, since man, being moral and spiritual, can find no satisfaction except in God. To reject the gift God desires to give—Himself—is the fire that dieth not... By contrast, heaven is the beatific vision, ever deeper communion with God, the perfection of God's image, the fulfillment of spiritual nature, the maturing of higher capacities, the perfection in holiness, serving God day and night..."

"Both Jesus and the New Testament church treated the present condition of the dead with marked reserve. Although in heaven or hell, their fate is declared only at the judgment. The Christian at death confidently resigns his spirit to the Father, and enters the blessedness of fellowship with Him."***

Another contemporary, writing on the same subject, makes the point that "We must rigidly adhere to the principle: 'To the law and to the testimony!'"

What has the God of truth written for our learning?" and then proceeds to declare that "The Old Testament insists on the fact of human survival of death." He asks: "May we define death as 'loss of life'?", and proceeds to answer his own question: "Clearly not! The Old Testament shows us that death is rather an alteration of place, from earth to Sheol; and of state, from the body—soul unity of life on earth to the separate life of the soul in Sheol... continuous with the present life in terms of character and personality."

The doctrine of heaven and hell is closely allied with that of the immortal soul. We have shown beyond doubt that man has no immortal soul, hence no need for an eternal place to receive both good and bad souls.

The belief in heaven and hell is commonly accepted, although hell is not much talked about in this age. Such doctrine is not according to the Scriptures. Heaven exists and hell exists, but they are not places for the repose of good and bad souls. Heaven is God's dwelling place, the home of His angels. Hell is the grave, the place appointed for all living. The Hebrew word **Sheol** appears 65 times in the Old Testament and is translated "hell" 31 times, "the grave" 31 times and "the pit" three times. The Revised Version leaves **Sheol** untranslated throughout. There is not one instance where "grave" could not be substituted in the context.

That "the Old Testament insists on the fact of human survival of death" is a misstatement of fact. There is nothing in the Bible to support such a statement. When a man dies, all life processes cease. God's Word is explicit: "The living know that they shall die: but the dead know not anything, . . . Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with thy might; for there is no work, nor device, nor knowledge, nor wisdom, in the grave whither thou goest" (Eccl. 9:5, 10).

"Man that is in honour, and understandeth not, is like the beasts that perish. He shall go to the generation of his fathers; they shall never see light. . . . His breath goeth forth, he returneth to his earth; in that very day his thoughts perish" (Ps. 49:20, 19; 146:4). Job was equally clear: "For I know that thou wilt bring me to death, and to the house appointed for all living" (Job 30:23). There is nothing about a man that survives death, as is plainly shown in the Scriptures. To say that death is not death is only to deceive ourselves.

Immortality is promised to those who make

** *Basic Christian Doctrines*, edited by C. F. H. Henry, pp. 270-274.

themselves worthy of it. It is conditional, and it is yet future. Only Christ has received immortality (I Tim. 6:16).

5. Justification by faith. How can a man be just before God? According to theology, no man can justify himself. God's holiness demands payment for sin and this penalty Christ paid on the cross. "Justification is that judicial act of God's free mercy whereby He pronounces guiltless those sinners condemned under the law, constitutes them as actually righteous, once and for all, in the imputed righteousness of Christ—on the grounds of His atoning work, by grace, through faith alone apart from works—and assures them of a full pardon, acceptance, . . . adoption as sons, and heirs of eternal life. . . . Such as are brought into this standing are enabled to perform good works. . . . Yet such works . . . make no contribution to the soul's justification."[†]

This is the doctrine as taught and accepted by most Christian churches. Let us examine it in the light of Scripture.

a. The meaning of justification. To justify means "to show justice, to do justice, to vindicate, to treat as just." Treating a criminal with justice in no way changes a sinner into a saint. It does not automatically make the unrighteous righteous.

b. Who will be justified before God? Paul answered this in Romans 2:13: "For not the hearers of the law are just before God, but the doers of the law shall be justified." To stand approved at the Judgment, one must be a **doer** of the law of God, not just a **hearer**.

c. How are we justified? We are first justified by being accepted to work in the vineyard of the Lord. God accepts the beginner on his potential, not on his accomplishments. His past, however sinful, will not count against him if he does what is right in the sight of God after coming under covenant.

Justification does not relieve the individual from the responsibility of living a righteous life. After being justified, accepted to work in the vineyard, it is for that individual to accept the responsibility for his own life and conduct. He must, in the words of the writer of Hebrews, "go on unto perfection" (Heb. 6:1), for in the end he will stand or fall by his own righteousness. There is no way by which one person can be judged righteous on the merits of another. The righteous life of Christ saved only Himself; only by following His example and dying to sin can others be saved.

The apostle James clearly spelled out the pro-

cess of justification: "Ye see then how that by works a man is justified, and not by faith only. . . . For as the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without works is dead also" (Jas. 2:22, 26). **Justification requires both faith and works.**

6. Satan and the Demons. A recent surge of interest in the occult has brought this doctrine to the foreground. Satan has been acknowledged as the "spirit of evil," or the "power of evil," and often used as an excuse for evil in the world. That demons exist in an unexplainable, invisible form and successfully hold sway in certain individuals is also claimed. Some members of the clergy have become adept in the art of "casting out demons" (always for a fee), thus freeing these individuals from "demon possession."

Does the Bible acknowledge a universal "power" or "spirit" of evil in the form of Satan? Are there such things as invisible "spirits" that possess people, causing "demon possession"?

Practically all Christendom would answer these questions in the affirmative. **Theology notwithstanding, we are confident that the Bible does not teach the existence of demons or a literal devil or a universal "spirit of evil."** The word Satan or devil in the New Testament is from the Greek **diabolos** which has for its primary meaning a "false accuser, a slanderer, an adversary." The translation of **diabolos** as "devil" throughout the New Testament represents the common belief in demons in Apostolic times.

The idea of a superhuman spirit creature that tempts men and women to do evil was introduced into Christian thought from pagan mythology. A dualistic arrangement of the power of good and the power of evil eternally warring against each other was the basis of the religion of Persia (admittedly pagan) and long antedated Christianity. It was from Persia that the doctrine came and not from the Scriptures.

The devil or Satan of the Bible is the personification of evil, or as defined by **Unger's Bible Dictionary**, "One who slanders another for the purpose of injury, a calumniator." It is used figuratively of an exceedingly wicked person, a mischievous person, a fiend.

As to casting out devils, no one today can "cast out devils" because there are none to cast out. Any person professing to do so is an imposter, a deceiver. Devils and demons are today as they have always been, the product of men's minds.

Reprints of these studies are available upon request.

[†] *Basic Christian Doctrines*, pp. 213, 214.

King James Version
 Revised Standard
 Phillips Modern English
 Jerusalem Bible
 Berkeley Version
 Williams
 Beck
 Goodspeed
 New English
 American Standard
 New American Standard
 Rotherham
 Weymouth
 Knox
 Lamsa
 Moffatt
 The Living Bible

WHICH Translation?

SO many different translations of the Bible are available today that people are bewildered and confused. Which Bible is "The Bible"? Which is the most accurate and the most reliable? Which should one follow?

We are living in what has been called the second great century of Bible translation. The first century of translation was between 1515 and 1615, during which nine important translations appeared. The last and greatest of these was the King James Version, which is still in common use today.

For the next two and a half centuries, no new significant translations appeared. Then, near the beginning of the twentieth century, the art of Bible translating revived and several well-known versions appeared: "The Twentieth Century New Testament" in 1902; "New Testament in Modern Speech" (1903) by R. F. Weymouth; the "Holy Bible in Modern English" (1903) by Ferrar Fenton; James Moffatt's "New Translation of the Bible" in 1928; "The Complete Bible: An American Translation" (1935) by E. J. Goodspeed, and others.

Nor was this the end. More recent years have seen the appearance of several more, including a version for Roman Catholics by R. A. Knox in 1949; the "Revised Standard Version," which was completed in 1952, and which has received wide acceptance all over the Protestant English-speaking world; "The Authentic New Testament" by J. H. Schonfield (1955); "The Berkeley Version in Modern English" in 1959, revised in 1969; the "New Testament in Modern English" by J. B. Phillips, in 1958, which has been called the "best

kind of paraphrase"; "The Jerusalem Bible" in 1966, a Catholic edition; William Barclay's "The New Testament" in 1969; "The New American Bible" in 1970; "The New English Bible," completed by a group of Protestant translators in 1970; the New Testament of "Today's English Version" in 1966, by the American Bible Society; and "The New International Version" in 1973. Extremely popular and widely circulated, especially among lay readers, is "The Living Bible," which appeared in 1971. But it is a paraphrase, not a translation, which means that its text cannot be considered reliable Scriptural rendering of the original text.

Why New Translations?

The King James Version stood unchallenged for nearly three centuries. Why the sudden interest in newer versions?

Language is a developing and continually changing instrument serving man's need. Its purpose is to communicate the culture and the ways of living and thinking between individuals or groups of individuals. Much has happened in the past three and a half centuries to change the way we think and the way we live. We today are quite different from what people were in England during the days of King James I; therefore it is not strange that we use and understand language in a different way.

For example, the King James Version uses the word "conversation" where we today would say "conduct," or "way of life." Why? Because that is what people thought of in the days of King James, when they thought of conversation. So when we read that we should have our "conversation honest

Seven Versions of Romans 12:1-2

King James Version

"I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service.

"And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind..."

Revised Standard Version

"I appeal to you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship.

"Do not be conformed to this world but be transformed by the renewal of your mind..."

New English Bible

"Therefore, my brothers, I implore you by God's mercy to offer your very selves to him: a living sacrifice, dedicated and fit for his acceptance, the worship offered by mind and heart.

"Adapt yourselves no longer to the pattern of this present world, but let your minds be remade and your whole nature thus transformed..."

among the Gentiles," or that we should be an example of the believers "in conversation," we must think of our whole conduct, not just our words, for that is what Paul meant, and that is what the translators understood it to mean.

As another example, the word "prevent" is what we use for "hinder" or "restrain." In 1611 it meant "precede," or "go before." Hence when Paul wrote in I Thessalonians 4:15, "We who are alive... shall not prevent them which are asleep," he meant "We who are alive... shall not go before those who have fallen asleep."

Another example is the word "let," which meant "prevent" or "hinder." Today it means "allow," and we may easily misunderstand Paul when he says (Rom 1:13), "Oftentimes I purposed to come unto you, but was let hitherto." What he meant was, "Often I have planned to visit you, but thus far I have been prevented."

Language Problems

There is yet another problem in communicating the language of one people to another people, even when it is changed into their own language form. That is the differences in illustrations commonly used, or popular understanding of various words and terms.

The New Testament was not written in a special or artificial language designed for the express purpose of conveying Scripture. It was written in Greek, the ordinary language of the people for whom it was written at the time. Many figures are used metaphorically according to the way the people of that time would have used them and understood them.

For example, the "loins" were the waist, and the figure "gird up the loins" meant to be alert, prepared. As used in Luke 12:35, "Let your loins be girded about," the meaning is, "Be ready for action, with belts fastened." It is used again in Eph. 6:14, "having your loins girt about with truth," which means, "with truth as a belt tight around your waist." And Peter's words, "Gird up the loins of your mind," mean "prepare your minds for action" (I Pet. 1:13).

Sports and games were very popular among the people of the early centuries, and the apostle Paul drew illustrations and lessons from them. Knowing this fact helps us understand Paul's thought. He thinks of himself as a Christian athlete: "But I keep under my body, and bring it into subjection lest that by any means, when I have preached to others, I myself should be a castaway" (I Cor. 9:27). Runners in the large public races had to undergo exacting training; so must the Christian runner. Hence we hear Paul saying of his Christian discipline, "I treat my body hard and make it obey me, for, having been an announcer myself, I should not want to be disqualified" (Jerusalem Bible).

Another problem involved in translating is the fact of language differences. A single word may carry many definitions and many shades of meaning. Finding the word in another language which is equivalent *in meaning* to the original word may be difficult, especially when the thought of the word is an abstract idea. Sometimes there is no one English word which will express what a single word in Greek may express. This makes word-for-word translation the more difficult.

Today's English Version

"So then, my brothers, because of God's many mercies to us, I make this appeal to you: Offer yourselves as a living sacrifice to God, dedicated to his service and pleasing to him. This is the true worship that you should offer.

"Do not conform outwardly to the standards of this world, but let God transform you inwardly by a complete change of your mind...."

Phillips Modern English

"With eyes wide open to the mercies of God, I beg you, my brothers, as an act of intelligent worship, to give him your bodies, as a living sacrifice, consecrated to him and acceptable to him.

"Don't let the world around you squeeze you into its own mould, but let God remake you so that your whole attitude of mind is changed...."

Jerusalem Bible

"Think of God's mercy, my brothers, and worship him, I beg you, in a way that is worthy of thinking beings, by offering your living bodies as a holy sacrifice, truly pleasing to God.

"Do not model yourselves on the behavior of the world around you, but let your behavior change, modeled by your new mind...."

Williams

"I beg you, therefore, brothers, through these mercies God has shown you, to make a decisive dedication of your bodies as a living sacrifice, devoted and well-pleasing to God, which is your reasonable service.

"Stop living in accordance with the customs of this world, but by the new ideals that mold your minds continue to transform yourselves...."

Why Do Translations Differ?

We know that the New Testament was written originally in Greek, and we naturally assume that the Bible we have today is a translation of one Greek manuscript which the people of the early Church compiled and preserved. But this is not true. Unfortunately, there is no one original manuscript from which we may obtain the entire New Testament just as the early Church had it in the first century. No original manuscript of any New Testament book exists today.

The original Greek text of the New Testament, however, is preserved in whole or in part in some 5000 manuscripts—a wealth of resource such as no other body of ancient literature can approach! Among these are complete editions dating back to somewhere around 350 A. D. Fragments of papyrus copies of books of the New Testament date from the first and second centuries. One fragile bit of papyrus containing a brief portion of the gospel of John (chapter 18) is dated around 125 A. D., which is perhaps no more than sixty years from the time the original Gospel was written!

All these manuscripts are copies, and are therefore subject to human error. But their accuracy is amazing—a sure evidence that God was watching over His Word and preserving it for future generations. When manuscripts of earlier and later dates have been studied and compared, very few copyist errors have been found. This is due largely to the strictures of many of the monks who laboriously copied them letter by letter. Each day's copy work, we are told, had to be checked letter by letter. This

helped to keep mistakes to a minimum.

Because of the many manuscripts extant, and because of the slight differences between them (though minimal), translations of various texts will vary, according to which manuscript or manuscripts were used for the original source.

In this respect, Bible scholars and translators today have a great advantage over those who translated the King James Version in 1611. The Greek New Testament from which those translators worked was known as the *Textus Receptus*, which was actually the work of a Dutch scholar named Desiderius Erasmus in 1516. Erasmus had no manuscript copy older than the tenth century A. D. And some were as recent as the sixteenth century. Had he used an older manuscript from which to make his copy, he would have perpetuated fewer errors (we may safely assume that the more times a particular manuscript is copied, the more errors it will contain).

Today scholars have manuscripts, even complete editions, dating from the fifth and fourth centuries, as mentioned above. Even older are the papyri manuscripts, dating back to the third and second centuries. For this reason, many of the modern translations are much closer to the original Greek as it was composed by the Bible authors than the text of the King James Version could possibly be.

The most significant differences between the King James Version and newer versions which have been translated from older manuscripts are

(Continued on page 20)

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

“What is the meaning of Ecclesiastes 3:21, ‘Who knoweth the spirit of man that goeth upward, and the spirit of the beast that goeth downward to the earth?’ Doesn’t this sound like we have a ‘spirit’ that goes to God when we die?”

The rendering of this verse in the King James Version would easily convey what you suggest, that the spirit of man is different from the spirit of animals in that it ascends.

However, this thought is not in harmony with general Bible teaching, or even the thought of the context in which this verse occurs. In the verses immediately preceding, the author has been observing the similarity between man and beast, not noting any differences. Starting at verse 18 we read, “I said in mine heart concerning the estate of the sons of men, that God might manifest them, and that they might see that they themselves are beasts. For that which befalleth the sons of men befalleth beasts; even one thing befalleth them: as the one dieth, so dieth the other; yea, they have all one breath; so that a man hath no preeminence above a beast: for all is vanity. All go unto one place; all are of the dust, and all turn to dust again” (Eccl. 3:18-20). Up to this point there is no slight suggestion that a dead man is superior to the dead beast in any way, or that there is any preeminence whatever. Verse 21 would seem to introduce a different thought: “Who knoweth the spirit of man that goeth upward, and the spirit of the beast that goeth downward to the earth?” But the next verse returns to the previous thought: “Wherefore I perceive that there is nothing better, than that a man should rejoice in his own works; for that is his portion: for who shall bring him to see what shall be after him?” (v. 22).

Bible students seem to agree that verse 21 as rendered in our Common Version does not carry the original thought. The KJV is translated from the Masoretic Text of the Bible, which was compiled about 500 A. D. by the Masoretes, who at this point made what one scholar calls “a dogmatic alteration of the sense.” Perhaps the idea came from Mesopotamian astral religion, which held that the soul of man had come from the heights of heaven and would return after man’s death.

The passage (Eccl. 3:21) is more correctly ren-

dered from the original Hebrew by the Septuagint and other versions, which read: “Who has seen the spirit of the sons of man, whether it goes upward? and the spirit of the beast, whether it goes downward to the earth?” (Septuagint); “Who knows that the breath of man ascends upward and the breath of the beast descends downward to the earth?” (NASB); “Who knows whether the spirit [breath] of man goes upward or whether the spirit [breath] of the beast goes downward to the earth?” (NEB); “Who knows if the spirit of man mounts upward or if the spirit of the beast goes down to the earth?” (Jerusalem Bible).

The statement implies a negative question. “Who knows . . . ?” Who has seen? The answer is *no one*. Solomon was very likely acquainted with those who believed that the spirit of man goes a different direction from the spirit of beasts; but in this passage he realizes that “as the one dieth, so dieth the other; yea, they have all one breath; so that a man hath no preeminence above a beast: for all is vanity.” When a man dies, he ceases to breathe; his breath goes into the vast reservoir of air that surrounds him, and he is non-existent, as any other animal. Contrary to popular belief, the Bible does not uphold the idea of a continued existence of the personality or any part of the individual after death. “The dead know not anything” (Eccl. 9:5). ●

Which Translation?

(Continued from page 19)

not copyist’s *errors* which have been perpetuated but clear *additions* which copyists made to the text, and which were henceforward incorporated as part of the Scripture text. These additions are not identifiable in the King James Version, as they were part of the “original” Greek from which it was translated. But modern translators often note them, or use parentheses around such passages. An example of such a passage is the concluding section of the Gospel of Mark, verses 9-20 of chapter 16, which is not to be found in the older Greek manuscripts. A verse in the First Epistle of John (5:7) is a clear addition by some unknown copyist during the early centuries. Another example is found in the addition of “fasting” to prayer in Matthew 17:21, Mark 9:29, Acts 10:30 and I Corinthians 7:5. In Mark 9:29, the oldest manuscripts read, “This kind

can come forth by nothing but by prayer." The words "and fasting" were added by copyists who thought to improve upon the original.

Which Translation?

When everything has been said about translation problems, language problems, obsolete expressions, inaccuracies, etc., one fact remains: No new translation has so far dislodged the King James Version from its place of wide and continuing acceptance. For overall and general use, the King James Version has the language and dignity of style which make it timeless. The problems it presents are not that many or that great. Newer versions may easily be consulted when a passage stands in question. Seldom, if ever, does an error in rendering involve any matter of either Christian faith or practice. This fact we may credit to the overruling providence of God.

We must remember, however, that no translation—new or old—is completely accurate; nor is any completely free from theological bias. Any translator, when he comes upon a word for which he must choose one of many meanings, is going to be influenced by what he believes is appropriate to the passage. Hence every translation becomes, to a limited degree, a commentary. This is especially true in some of the newer versions of the Bible, in which the translator has rendered by the thought of the sentence rather than attempting to translate word for word.

As for paraphrases, very few have any merit whatever. Some make good reading, where the thought of the original text of the Bible is maintained. But in general they contain multiple distortions of fact and meaning.

Those newer versions of the Bible which are readable and reasonably reliable and dignified (such as the New English Bible, the New International Version, the Jerusalem Bible, the Revised Standard Version and others) may prove an invaluable stimulus to more thoughtful reading. They give fresh wording to passages whose meaning has been all but lost in over-familiarity. By using more currently understood language, they force us to stop and think about what is really being said. This is good, for the Scriptures contain such a depth of meaning that we need to be continually challenged by it.

Which translation, then?

For general use, we stand by the King James Version. Other translations are useful as supplements in study and for general reading, but none has all the advantages or the authority to displace the version of 1611. ●●

August, 1975

Kathy
Kandor's
Korner

A Vacation Lesson

"GREAT duck weather!" exclaimed Karl as he tried to see through the windshield through the pounding rain.

Janet and Brenda pressed their noses against the window glass. It was hot and humid, and Baby Kenny was becoming more and more restless. Windows had to be closed because of the severe rain-storm.

I glanced at my husband as he bent over the wheel, straining to keep an eye riveted on the treacherous winding road as we crept along.

"What a vacation!" I thought. "Here it is almost dark, and we must be miles and miles from any other human being, and only a narrow winding mountain road."

I sputtered aloud. "Can't imagine why you wanted to come this 'scenic' route. Haven't seen anything beautiful yet—except the rain. And there probably isn't a motel within a hundred miles. What a night to be out!"

Neal straightened his weary shoulders. "Be patient, dear. We're sure to find something soon."

I looked at him in disbelief. How could he be so optimistic on such a dismal night, and on such a road?

All was silent except for the beating rain upon the car and the swish, swish of the laboring windshield wipers. A perfectly lovely vacation ruined, absolutely ruined!

But it wasn't long before Neal's optimism was rewarded. We rounded a curve and there before us stood a small cluster of buildings. A light was shining dimly from a window in one of the houses.

"Not very inviting," I remarked as we turned into the driveway of the weatherbeaten house. I was thinking of the comfortable motels we had been enjoying along our route when the weather was too wet to camp out. (Continued next page)

"Any shelter is welcome tonight," Neal answered patiently.

To the children it was exciting to be stranded on a lonely mountain road at night. I didn't see it quite that way.

Neal and Karl made a dash for the tiny porch, shook off some of the water and knocked. A very pleasant-looking woman responded.

"Is it possible you have a couple of rooms we could rent for the night?"

"I have two small rooms upstairs which you are welcome to use. They're very small, but the best I can offer you." She stopped uncertainly as she noticed in the dim light that there were several more of us in the car. "But... I'm afraid there aren't beds enough for all of you."

"That's perfectly all right," my husband assured her. "We have our sleeping bags and all we need is a dry place to put them."

She welcomed us all warmly and led the way upstairs with a tiny oil lamp. My husband thanked her gratefully as she wished us a good night.

"It isn't much," I said to Neal when we were alone, "but it's better than trying to drive on a night like this." I grudgingly noticed that the room was spotless, despite its barrenness.

"That bed sure looks inviting," yawned Janet.

"That bed is for Mother," Neal reminded her. "You have your sleeping bag."

After family devotions, Neal picked up a lamp and with a special "Thank you, God, for finding us this place," he and Karl disappeared.

It didn't take the girls long to roll out their sleeping bags. After a few whispers and giggles all was silent.

I looked mournfully about the tiny room. Here we were stranded in this place in these dismal mountains. A feeling of self-pity crept over me as I tucked Kenny into bed. Slowly I undressed thinking of my ruined vacation, the days I had looked forward to for so many months. I blew out the lamp and pulled the blanket up around us. The girls' even breathing told me they were sound asleep.

Before I realized I had even gone to sleep, Janet was gently tugging at my blanket. I glanced at the little form beside me. "Still sound asleep," I mused.

Sunshine was streaming in through the small window. Outside it seemed that all the birds in the world had gathered to sing out their joy at the dawn of the new day.

Neal bounded in, his face aglow.

"Get up, dear," he said. "And come with me to the front porch if you want to see something!"

Out on the porch the scene that met my eyes

almost took away my breath. Shimmering lakes dotted the valleys between mountain peaks. Stately evergreens displayed their water-jeweled branches in the morning sun. A sparkling waterfall swooshed down a rocky wall and tumbled into the river below. What a sight!

Everywhere was beauty—beauty that only our great Creator could design. Even the old weather-beaten house took on a new look when the multitude of flowers surrounding it could be seen.

"Oh, Neal," I exclaimed. "It's all so beautiful. And—last night everything seemed so ugly."

The girls rounded the corner like small whirlwinds.

"Mother, Mother," Brenda exclaimed. "We even have a little park—"

"With a real picnic table and a fireplace!" finished Janet. She took my hand and led me around the corner. Neal and the children had already begun preparations for breakfast.

"Kathy!" My husband spoke as though he had a fresh idea. "Let's invite the lady of the house to have breakfast with us. Maybe we can share our faith and hope with her."

Our family has enjoyed several vacations since, but from none have I learned so deeply that God is in all the shadows as well as in the sunshine. I know God was teaching me a lesson. He wanted me to remember that even though I couldn't see the beauty in the rainswept darkness, nevertheless the beauty was there.

There is beauty all around us. Sometimes it may be hidden by trials, frustrations and temptations. But He who is with us is stronger than any trial that can cross our pathway, and when we set our hearts on pleasing Him, He will cause the sun to shine. The darkest cloud always has a silver lining.

Trying to see the hidden beauty—even in the rain,

Kathy

Let God Be True

(Continued from page 5)

lenniums previous. There is considerable evidence that the entire Old Testament as we have it today was existing in the Greek language in the form of the Septuagint by the second century B. C., and all of the writing of the New Testament was completed before the end of the first century A. D. The Bible has had many fierce opponents who would have exterminated it completely, had they had their way. But it survives today, living evidence of a living God. (CONTINUED NEXT ISSUE)

LETTERS

Now!

I have just been reading the *Megiddo Message* for July. The article, "Thank God for America," can apply equally to our country. We enjoy much the same privileges in religious worship. Truly it is wonderful to live where you are not afraid to worship as you please!

Now is the day of salvation! Now is the time for us to grow! Now is the time to work for a full reward!

World conditions look dark indeed, but for us these conditions mean only one thing: Our Master is near, even at the door.

Minnedosa, Manitoba, Canada

E. H.

Unchangeable

James says, speaking of God, that with Him there "is no variableness, neither shadow of turning."

God does not change His mind. He is constant and true and keeps His promises.

Man is inconstant and all his plans are subject to constant change. What he planned yesterday for today has undergone change, and today's plans for tomorrow will also change.

God's Word can be depended upon, for it is the unchangeable word of the unchangeable God. If we trust His unchangeable Word and are true to Him, we also are promised an unchangeable future.

Wausau, Wisconsin

E. S.

Time Slips Away

It seems so short a time since it was Abib first. How the days slip away. But how are we living each day? That is the all-important thing to concern us. We must live every day in expectation, knowing that the grand old Prophet will soon make his appearance. We must have on that beautiful garment of perfection, for we know that God is perfect and He will require perfection of all His children.

Milton, Iowa

E. T.

My Duty

God's real interest is in His little flock. All the promises contained in the Word are reserved for them. Surrounded by people who have nothing in common to share, they are few. Their lots are scattered. Each has his or her individual plot in which to expand everyday effort toward a good harvest.

My trials are not your trials, and yours are not mine, although sometimes they run akin. We each have a share to bear. Amid our labors and distractions, God is waiting, watching, intent upon our progress. He will give us the time and sufficient strength to do the work.

As faithful servants in the commonplace surroundings we cannot escape from the active, everyday life. What we need most is a steadfast purpose of obedience as our daily guide.

August, 1975

Lapses in obedience only subtract from our given time. These are days for intensive labor.

"All that I have and am are thine"—this is the vow I have made. It is my duty to keep it faithfully.

South Amboy, New Jersey

L. K.

Like Christ?

Being a true Christian is really a trying and demanding occupation and requires all of one's diligence and effort. It is the little things that are the real challenge—the small words we say, the idle thoughts we think, and the useless activities we find ourselves a part of. If it were only possible to retract our words, and thoughts and deeds and have them as if they had never been! But it is not so easy. Cleaning a spot from our Christian character is demanding.

What wonder and achievement there is in being like Christ. You have only to please the Father. In so many ways it is quite simple and unencumbered, but the actual practice of living it is another story. Can we achieve the same character as Jesus and share all eternity with Him and the others? There was a time when I thought it would have been absolutely impossible, but each day convinces me that I can. I never knew what it meant, but now I realize that it is total death to my personal self and that's a difficult death to achieve. The old man fights with desperation and every subtle trick there is! Restraining your tongue the first time draws the most blood, but the second time isn't quite as difficult I have found. Suffering insults in silence drains me dry. But you have been down this path before and can understand it. We have to keep striving to be counted among the faithful and worthy of a crown.

Baton Rouge, Louisiana

D. K.

No Unemployment

There is a lot of unemployment both in Canada and the United States at present, and it seems that the situation could become worse. But Christians are never unemployed. Though our job at the mill, or the factory, or whatever, may someday be gone, our time is being clocked up above, and we are the employees of God. We always have plenty of work on hand. Habits must be broken, and new ones made. Severity must be removed. Gentleness must be put in its place. Harsh words are to be stopped. Love should be instilled. Pride must be put down. A humble spirit must take its place. Sinful actions are to be prohibited, and godliness encouraged. Doubt is to be displaced by faith.

Joy must be added. Envyings must be subtracted. Anger must be put down. Tenderheartedness must be put up. Meekness must be revealed. Hate must be destroyed. And so our jobs, though some done once, must be repeated over and over again. Our work is not lacking, and we must keep our schedule busy. Payday could be just around the corner.

British Columbia, Canada

R. F.

Keep On Working

If we know the truth, the truth will make us free. But if we do not keep on working hard to the end, we will be faced with the sad fact that it could have been better to have kept on. We will be like the old-time poet, John Greenleaf Whittier, who said in one of his poems, "Of all sad words of tongue or pen, the saddest are these: It might have been."

We do not want that on our conscience at that soon-coming day, that it could have been different if we had worked harder and kept on the job until the end. So let us keep fighting the good fight.

Carrollton, Ohio

H. W.

READ *for Your LIFE!*

HISTORY OF THE MEGIDDO MISSION
THE COMING OF JESUS AND ELIJAH
WHAT MUST WE DO TO BE SAVED?

GOD'S SPIRITUAL CREATION

THE KINGDOM OF GOD

THE GREAT APOSTASY

AFTER DEATH, WHAT?

THE DEVIL AND HELL

TRINITY OR UNITY?

THE ATONEMENT

THE HOLY SPIRIT

THE SABBATH

ALL for \$1.00, Postpaid.

OBEDIENCE

(Continued from page 7)

people; and walk ye in all the ways that I have commanded you, that it may be well unto you." But did they? No, "they hearkened not, nor inclined their ear, but walked in the counsels and in the imagination of their evil heart, and went backward, and not forward."

The whole point of Jeremiah's sermon is the primacy of obedience, wholehearted, scrupulous, faithful obedience. In the words of Deuteronomy, "what thing soever I command you, observe to do it"; if you fail, your sacrifices are abomination.

Under the law of Moses, the sacrifice itself was not the center of their worship; it was merely the expression of obedience. By making the sacrifice the people *obeyed*. God demanded *obedience*, first, last and always; the sacrificing was only a means of expressing, developing, and training that spirit of obedience. And when the means of expression became a substitute for the reality which should have been expressed, it became abominable.

God is still dealing with His people according to these same basic principles; the terms of the Mosaic covenant were simply the ethical demands of obeying the voice of the Lord. And that same principle binds us today. Though we have no requirement to give of the best of our flocks and herds, we still must surrender "what thing soever I command you," and to us He says, "Give me thy heart." ●●

Obituary

Josie H. Roper

Once again we are reminded that we are mortal, as we announce the death of a long-time friend and subscriber, Josie H. Roper, of Rome, Georgia. Death is an enemy; but when it comes as a deliverer from months and years of suffering, it is almost a friend. Such was the case with our Sister; but she bore her afflictions with great patience and quiet resignation because of her hope and firm belief in the soon-coming of Christ and the resurrection of all who sleep in Him.

Sister Roper is survived by her husband, Henderson Roper, who cared for her faithfully; and a sister, Mrs. Sarah Jackson, also of Rome, Georgia, who shared her faith and who stood by her to the end. She also leaves to mourn her three other sisters, several nieces, nephews, and other relatives and friends.

Funeral services were conducted in the Greater Mt. Calvary Baptist Church, Rome, Georgia, the text of the message being provided by the Megiddo Mission Church of Rochester, New York. Attending the services were Sister Fanella Porter and Sister Shirley Byers of our Rochester Congregation.●●

From A Reader—

The Hardest Instrument

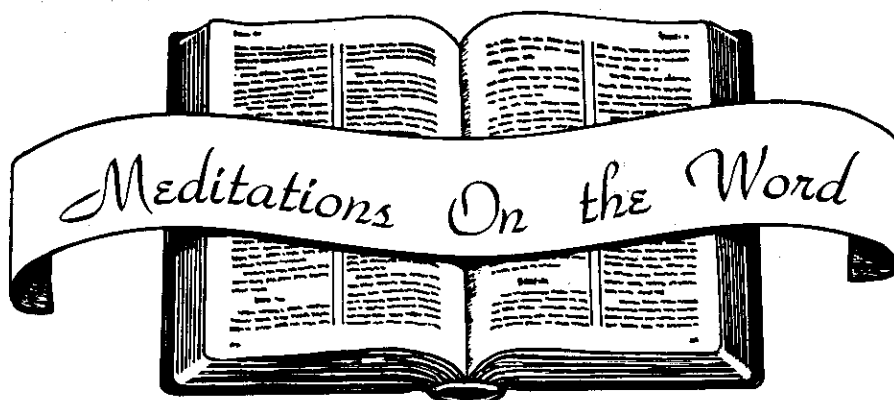
We read in Acts 15 of a rift between Paul and Barnabas which must have had its effect on Silas. Silas had done service for the church in Jerusalem, but now he became the replacement not only for Mark but also for Barnabas. Silas must have been grateful to be able to assist Paul and helped in every way he could.

Silas was not a natural leader as was Barnabas, but he became an able and faithful assistant to Paul. He had learned how to play that hardest of instruments to master: the "second fiddle." He knew how to stay in the background while the one blessed with greater talent occupied the center of the missionary stage.

We have a wonderful example in the life of faithful Silas. Let us be faithful even in playing "second fiddle," if need be.

Mrs. S., Wausau, Wisconsin

MEGIDDO MESSAGE



"Watch and pray, that ye enter not into temptation" (Matt. 26:41)

WHILE in this present mortal state, man is subject to temptation. The weak and the strong, the young and the old are alike tempted; nor are there any who are beyond temptation, regardless of their noble lives and spirituality. Fearful as the word temptation is, it has its place and value in a man's life. Our true worth and character is revealed by temptation. By the trials we endure, God determines the quality of our love and obedience to Him and our fitness for the higher service in His Kingdom.

The saints of old endured temptation and profited thereby. It developed them and, besides winning God's favor for them, left us noble records of their virtuous lives that we may likewise overcome our temptations and share the future glory with them.

Some temptations are resisted and subdued with not too much difficulty; but, unfortunately, there are other trials which, because of inexperience or carelessness, we allow to cast us down. Our carnal nature needs continual watching lest it develop sinful deeds. Outward resistance may profit for a while, but

to be effective the evil desire should be removed or rooted out from our heart entirely. If temptations are allowed to linger in our mind, and are nourished by improper thinking, the task of evicting them becomes more difficult. Unconquered temptations remain within as the small end of a wedge, which requires but the impact of the hammer of circumstances to shatter an otherwise good character.

The most satisfactory way to overcome temptation is to attack it at its first appearance. The first desire or impulse to stray from the path of right is much more easily restrained and corrected than the thought which has taken lodgment in our mind and is well established. It is easier to keep an enemy out of the house by barring the doors than to get him out after he is inside. But though we cannot avoid temptation entirely, we *can* prevent its affecting us.

Persistent temptation can be attributed directly to lack of faith. The mind is not fully settled. It is divided and wants some part of the world as well as the things of God. The way of Christ demands a complete break with the past; but as long

as we wish to carry some of our old ways into the new and living way, we cause ourselves many hurtful incidents. Because of a wavering faith and an unsteady purpose, careless individuals are many times tempted.

If, when we are tempted, we could see the results that follow our yielding, we would in most cases react much differently. But it is true that that which we desire seems for the moment the thing we cannot do without. We just have to have it! Yet how often, when the desire is temporarily gratified we are humiliated by our actions and wish that we had resisted. The easy way out does not always have the effect we would wish. Sometimes it is our greatest punishment to be given precisely what we crave, and, of course, all that goes with it.

Peter's denial of his Lord for the moment seemed a necessity—self-preservation—but his bitter tears afterward reveal his regret. How much better to resist the evil and to depend upon a good life well lived, than to yield to carnal emotions and then attempt to conceal the evil practices. Joseph, a slave, rejoiced over his victory, though

he suffered for it; King David mourned bitterly for his lack of self-control and attempted deception.

Knowing man's weaknesses and the tendencies to take the more alluring paths in life, Jesus frequently warned His followers to watch and pray. *Indeed*, we shall not heed these admonitions ourselves unless we, too, realize our moral frailty.

Prayer is essential. It is a virtue that prevails against all temptation. By intelligent prayer we keep our minds in a right spirit and maintain a proper attitude toward the law of God, realizing that without His law to sustain us we are but a step from being equal to the most sinful individuals.

While prayer is needful and beneficial we should realize that it will profit nothing if we pray contrary to the will of God. We cannot hope to be delivered from temptation, regardless of our prayers, if we do not honestly and firmly determine to do the best we can to keep out of it. If we learn to pray as we ought, we will also endeavor to *live* as we ought.

The manner in which Jesus triumphed over His hardships is not a secret; it is clearly stated, and the example is left us. It was by His frequent petitions to the Father in privacy that He developed strength and learned the Father's will; and, of course, His life corresponded to His prayers. He did those things pleasing to the Father.

Notice how our Master, when His popularity was high, "departed into a solitary place and there prayed" (Mark 1:35). He had healed many sick of various diseases; people were thronging about Him. The newly-opened eyes of the blind were radiant with thanksgiving; the once-lame man leaped as a hart. Some measure of popular favor rested upon Him. Yet He stole away to pray.

We are told that Jesus was tempted in all points like as we are (Heb. 4:15), and what would be more natural for us than to think too highly of self in a time of successful public work! Thus we see that our Master prayed to keep His life secure against the perils of success. Success may bruise our character more than failure. It takes a steady hand to carry a full cup. There is significant counsel in His practice for all believers. When we are busily engaged in a successful undertaking we ought to pray that our faith fail not.

We can learn again from another incident in our Master's life. We read: "And it came to pass in those days, that he went out into a mountain to pray, and continued all night in prayer to God. And when it was day, he called unto him his disciples: and of them he chose twelve, whom also he named apostles" (Luke 6:12-13). Jesus took time to pray before He made a momentous decision—

a night of prayer, *then* a great decision. In our own degree we have to make choices in our individual lives. We have to choose our careers, we have to make choice of turnings in the ever-winding way. Serious decisions often have to be made. Temptations to take the wrong course are ever present. We are prone to live amid small and petty purposes, and to be prejudiced in many ways.

Prayer will help us kill the little things and strengthen us to seek first the eternal and to maintain lofty aims and motives. Let us not neglect it. ●

Sin--Caterpillar or Butterfly?

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fy. Life is fading. The worm of corruption is apparent. It has truly been said, "There is more bitterness in sin's ending than ever was sweetness following its actions." Though you may see nothing but good in its commission, it is certain that you will suffer only woe in its conclusion. "Sin may open bright as the morning, but it will end dark as night." The butterfly cannot endure, nor can sin's pleasures outlast life's brief day.

Our sorest temptations are met with individually, and it is only as we fix ourselves a definite aim, a lofty goal, even that of aspiring to live before God and the angels, and not before butterflies and caterpillars, shall we successfully resist the deceitful promptings of sin.

Whenever a temptation takes on the appearance of a beautiful butterfly, think of it as a destructive caterpillar. Remember, it is just a painted worm decked in a velvet suit and adorned with sparkling gems, but whose end is bitter as wormwood. Would you choose that in preference to the glorious Kingdom of God with its sparkling fountains and streets of gold, vivacity and vigor that will increase through the ages until ten thousand million years have flitted by, each growing happier and more glorious? And then to think, our joy shall have just begun! Does it seem possible we could desire the short, fleeting life of a butterfly, only to rest in the dust?

Let us pray God that He may grant us a vehement desire for better things, that we may resist the deceitful promptings of sin, whether caterpillar or butterfly. ●●

The reason so many people never get anywhere in life is that when opportunity knocks, they are out in the backyard looking for four-leaf clovers.



SIN as a caterpillar is dangerous, but sin as a butterfly is a thousand times worse. If sin in its ugliest form is dangerous, who can know its unmeasured power and influence when it puts on robes of beauty!

It is said that the finest mosaic picture contains as many as 870 separate pieces to the square inch of surface, but upon the same space of a butterfly's wings has been counted no less than 150,000 separate glittering scales, each scale carrying in it a gorgeous color, beautiful and distinct. On every wing there is a picture as varied as the rainbow. Every wing is iridescent with different lights that shift and change. No other creature of earth, air or plant life exhibits such gorgeous colors and markings as does the butterfly. The poet calls it a flying and flashing gem, a flower of paradise, gifted with a magic power of flight.

In contrast, we think of the caterpillar as a low, insignificant and repulsive crawler. We see no beauty in this useless and destructive worm, yet the butterfly is only a caterpillar beautified with wings. It is just a painted worm decked in a velvet suit and adorned with sparkling gems. Egg, caterpillar and butterfly, the three forms of this creature's existence, are one and of the same nature.

Naturally when something attracts our attention and admiration, we have a desire for it. Thus we stand in constant danger of being deceived by sin as the butterfly.

The detestable worm of pride can so transform itself into a flying, flashing gem that one is not aware of its destructiveness. It is an ever-present part of human nature. Oh pride! how wantonly does it deceive mankind under different disguises. Sometimes it wears the face of piety, sometimes of generosity. It has even the assurance to put on robes of religion and ornaments that belong only to heroic virtue. It is a deceitful sweetness, a dangerous honor. The whole world cannot hold a proud man up, for God shall abase him; nor can all the

world keep a humble man down, for God shall exalt him. We have nothing of which to be proud, but much to induce humility.

When trying to make a good impression on man, we forget the horrid impression we are making on God. Man may see only the glittering wings of the butterfly, but God sees the loathsome caterpillar. The light and frivolous tendency of man known as foolishness beautifies its appearance with wings of velvety softness and eye-catching color; even that called wit and humor, which is readily admired by mankind. They perceive not the destructive caterpillar. If we condone the frivolity and foolishness going on round about us and give the nod of approval to the shiftless and beggarly elements of the world, we are disdainfully ignorant of the deceitfulness of sin.

There are many evils which appear to us as a caterpillar, such as immorality, murdering and thieving. We do not desire the company of the angry, jealous, selfish or indecent person; yet even these evils have the power to deck themselves in robes that resemble those of truth. Unlawful pleasures often appear gorgeous and iridescent with different lights that shift and change as do the butterfly's wings. There is nothing more attractive nor yet more deadly than self-gratification.

When a craving for anything forbidden predominates the mind, our future is in the hands of our worst enemy. It is the nature of the caterpillar to crawl, and instinct teaches it to climb upward in search of sustenance. So the natural man crawls without effort. He desires just enough religion to lift him above the lowest element, but not enough to keep him from returning to the dust. He looks simply on the things which are seen. He who lives to eat and drink and pamper himself with whatsoever his soul desires, flitting about like a butterfly, no doubt thinks he is enjoying life to the full; but the day soon comes when these no longer satis-

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Your God Is Above

*If you get what you want in your struggle for pelf,
And the world makes you King for a day,
Remember the God who has given you life--
And see what HE has to say.*

*For it isn't your father or mother or wife
Whose judgment upon you must pass;
Remember your God, who looks down from above--
HE's the one you must face at the last.*

*HE's the one you must please, never mind all the rest,
And He'll guide you clear through to the end.
And you've passed your most dangerous, difficult test,
When HE is your Guardian and Friend.*

*You may be like Jack Horner and "chisel" your way
And think you're some wonderful one,
But if God up above says you're no more than dust--
Take heed--or so soon you'll be gone.*

*You may fool all the world down the pathway of years
While men give you goodwill and love,
But your final reward will be heartache and tears
If you've slighted your Father above.*

--Contributed.