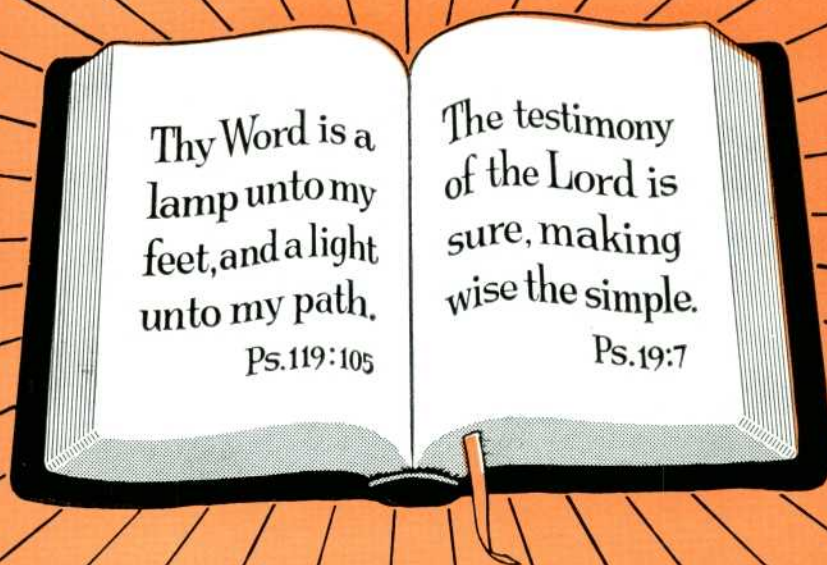


# Megiddo Message

DEVOTED TO THE CAUSE OF CHRIST



## The Radiance of Hope

Does God Seek Man?

Lest We Sin

The Sabbath of the Bible



# "Forgive Me"--or "Excuse Me"?

IT HAS been said that he who is good at making excuses is seldom good at anything else.

There may be many exceptions to this unflattering comment, but its kernel of truth is worth considering. Whoever became proficient in any line while always making excuses for his failures?

Yet, in the most important matter of all, the preparing of ourselves for a place in God's coming Kingdom, we so easily make excuses. We make them to ourselves, to one another, and—even to God.

In the prayer Jesus taught His disciples, He petitioned, "Forgive us our debts." Notice He said "*Forgive* us," not "*Excuse* us." Between forgiveness and excuse is a great gulf. When we ask forgiveness, we are acknowledging that we did wrong. "I knew better, and should have *done* better," we admit. When we make excuses for ourselves, we are saying that we really weren't to blame for what we did—a statement which may be partly true, or wholly true, or wholly untrue. If it is partly true, then it is partly untrue and we *were* to blame for some *part* of what happened and need forgiveness for our wrong. If we were not at all to blame, if it was wholly the result of circumstances beyond our control and we committed no sin, then excusing ourselves may be justifiable.

As long as we are mortal, we will be prone to err in human judgment, and when we do, all we need is excusing. But one thing to remember is that if excusing is all we need, we only waste time telling our excuses, because God knows all the real excuses very much better than we do. "He knoweth our frame; he remembereth that we are dust."

What needs to concern us are the times when we *are* to blame for doing wrong, when we knew better and should have done better. Excuses here are totally unavailing. When we have sinned, we need to repent, turn, and humbly ask God to forgive.

The trouble is that too often what we call

asking God's forgiveness really consists of little except asking Him to accept our excuses—the excuses we have already used to satisfy our own consciences. This is not forgiveness. Our hearts feel no hatred of our sin. There is no sorrow for the wrong, no repentance, and no turning. We go to God with our excuses, anxious to point out to Him that we really were not so bad as we may have seemed, that we had very good reason to act (or speak, or think, or feel) as we did. He should understand. We forget that God knows the secrets of our hearts. We forget this, and so go away imagining that we have been forgiven, when all that has really happened is that we have satisfied ourselves with our own excuses.

We need to realize that sin in God's sight is serious. How tragic if we come to Judgment with sins unrepented of, and unforgiven!

Sin separates us from God; sin keeps us from obtaining His favor. Sin will keep us from being accepted when Christ comes with an innumerable company of angels. Sin will exclude us from His heavenly Kingdom. God wants a humble and contrite heart. "A broken and a contrite heart, O God, thou wilt not despise" (Ps. 51:17).

We should realize our own need for God's mercy, He who has not "dealt with us after our sins, nor rewarded us according to our iniquities" (Ps. 103:10). Can we picture His matchless Divinity ever being pleased with the little, weak imaginings of our minds that we use for "excuses" (sometimes we call them "reasons")?

Our God loves righteousness. If we would be godly, *we* must love righteousness. We must see our sins as God sees them, and realize that before Him we "have no excuse" (Rom. 2:1, RSV).

Let's throw away that book of excuses we have relied on so long. It is God's forgiveness we need. And forgiving does not mean excusing. ●●

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

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

The MEGIDDO MESSAGE will

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

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

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

Second Class Postage paid at Rochester, New York.

## Megiddo Means

"a place of troops"

—Gesenius' Hebrew Lexicon

"a place of God"

—Young's Analytical Concordance

Geographically, Megiddo was and is a town in Palestine, located at a strategic point, demanding heavy fortification; for Palestine is the age-old gateway between East and West, and the avenue connecting North and South. Supremacy there has long been the envy of aggressive nations, and the prevailing power has guarded it with jealous eye. The famous pass at Megiddo through a solid mountain range is the one means by which this avenue between continents may be traversed.

In the spiritual parallel, it is a place of troops, where soldiers are equipped for spiritual warfare against the forces of evil without and within. "The weapons we wield are not merely human but divinely potent to demolish strongholds; we demolish sophistries and all that rears its proud head against the knowledge of God; we compel every human thought to surrender in obedience to Christ" (II Cor. 10:4-5, NEB).

# Megiddo Message

Vol. 65, No. 8

August, 1978

## EDITORIAL

### 2 "Forgive Me"—or "Excuse Me"?

Most of us get too much practice in making excuses

## ARTICLES

### 4 The Radiance of Hope

Is our path growing brighter and brighter unto the perfect Day?

### 8 Does God Seek Man or Does Man Seek God?

God's sovereignty does not override human initiative.

### 9 Non-Retaliation

### 17 Conscience—Dare We Trust It?

The human conscience is only what it is educated to be.

### 19 Let the Oil Flow

The greater our capacity, the greater will be God's giving.

### 24 Over the Fence

## BIBLE STUDY

### 10 "That Ye Sin Not"

Third in a series of studies on the Epistle of First John

## REGULAR FEATURES

### 13 Understanding the Bible: *The Sabbath of the Bible*

A study of the origin of the Sabbath, and present-day theories about observing the Sabbath.

### 20 Kathy Kandor's Korner: "Everybody Does It"

A story for the times when we forget that God sees, and God knows.

### 22 Scriptural Spotlight: *Having Done All, To Stand*

On Ephesians 6:13. God provides a full suit of armor.

### 25 Pro & Con

Discussing the origin of the devil, and Ezekiel 28.

### 27 Our Readers Write . . .

### 28 Cover Feature: *The Potter*

Bible Quotations in this issue:

Unidentified quotations are from the King James Version

Other versions are abbreviated as: *New International Version* (NIV); *New English Bible* (NEB); *Revised Standard Version* (RSV); *The New Testament in Modern English* (Phillips); *The Living Bible* (TLB); *New American Standard* (NAS); *The Jerusalem Bible* (JB).

# The Radiance of Hope

HOPE IS a vigorous principle; it is furnished with light and heat to advise and execute; it sets the head and heart to work and animates a man to do his utmost. Thus, by perpetual pushing and assurance, it puts difficulty out of countenance and makes a seeming impossibility give way.

In these days of religious indifference, listlessness and unconcern, God's Word still offers us hope, living, buoyant, steadfast hope. Our inward desire for something better combines with an unfaltering faith in the promises of God to give us hope; and this hope is a light, a fire. God would have His people "zealous in good works," abounding in zeal, radiant with hope.

The early Church was a church on fire for God. Emulating the intensity of their leader Paul, they were "fervent in spirit," serving the Lord with all of their hearts. Theirs was a hope that lived in their hearts and shone on their faces. They were alive; they were expectant; they were radiant.

Those early Christians were known to all with whom they came in contact by the joy that beamed from their faces. They were a light for God, a light whose intensity warmed the chilly indifference of men and women to enthusiasm for more of the knowledge of Jesus Christ. As they met and parted, their voices thrilled with hope: "Maranatha." And though they faced severe persecution, they went out to preach the glad tidings of great joy which they had received. So real was the hope which possessed them that they felt an irresistible inner compulsion to preach: "We cannot but speak the things which we have seen and heard" (Acts 4:20).

However hard their lot, these disciples of Christ were happy. Their hope was unquenchable; their joy, inextinguishable. Wherever they went, their faces radiated a glow which made men ask, "What good news have you heard? How can you be so full of joy when the world is so dark to everyone else?" Many a learned, rich and mighty man would

have gladly given up his wealth and power to be as hopeful, contented and happy as those despised and persecuted Christians.

The hope of these Christians was not vain; it was real and triumphant. Said Paul, "Wherever I go, thank God, he makes my life a constant pageant of triumph in Christ, diffusing the perfume of his knowledge everywhere by me. I live for God." (II Cor. 2:4, Moffatt). Fired with zeal and radiant with Divine hope, he went forth with the other apostles as a witness of the resurrected Christ.

Paul was a hopeful man, and he gave us his formula for generating hope: "We glory in tribulations also: knowing that tribulation worketh patience, and patience, experience; and experience, hope" (Rom. 5:3-5). His whole life centered around his hope that by forming a superior character, he might attain unto the resurrection of the dead and the promise of unending life. He addressed himself to Titus: "Paul, a servant of God, and an apostle of Jesus Christ, according to the faith of God's elect, and the acknowledging of the truth which is after godliness; in hope of eternal life, which God, that cannot lie, promised before the world began" (Tit. 1:1, 2).

Compare this promise with the hope of the world. There is none. Thinking men look to a brighter morrow, but they cannot overlook the threat of war which could destroy all of their accomplishments and wreck their lives. They see no peace on the horizon. They envision a day when biological sciences may have a cure for man's mental and physical ills. Increasing immorality, crime and juvenile delinquency, however, do not brighten the picture.

We should not be alarmed, because this very condition was prophesied nearly two millenniums ago. The Lord has given us ample evidence by which we can know the true and living God and place our confidence in His Word. Thus we have hope. When we obtain His knowledge, we can know for a certainty that there will dawn a brighter morrow when war, sickness, sorrow and death will

be unknown; when all evil and immorality will be swept away forever. And we can have hope that we ourselves will experience the pleasures of that day if we have kept the sayings of the Book.

Hope stimulates.

If the words of the apostle Peter are true, that the pure mind of a Christian needs continual stirring up lest he forget the promises of the Lord, then we all stand in need of such a stirring. The hope of God's blessed Book is a tonic of good cheer, comfort and consolation to keep us steady when the trials of life assail us.

The Bible in the home does not necessarily bless that home or brighten the hope of the household. To be beneficial, it must be studied, digested and assimilated until it actuates our daily conduct. Only then will we have the strength necessary to overcome the elements that are continually working death in our members.

Naturally, the center of the apostles' preaching was the Christ whom they had known. He had suffered cruel death, had triumphed in victorious resurrection, and had ascended to heaven where He had been glorified by His Father. Jesus was not someone about whom they had heard or of whose life they had read; He was someone with whom they had lived and walked and talked. He was not a vague character in a book but a man like themselves, a friend and teacher who had lived and died among them, but who had risen from death and was now alive for evermore!

The theme of the apostles' preaching was the Christ who would return to earth in glory to establish His Kingdom. The early Church believed intensely and passionately in the Second Coming. They lived and worked in anticipation.

Paul recognized the need of keeping this zeal stimulated. "Never let your zeal flag; maintain the spiritual glow." Are we doing this? If we are to be a replica of the Apostolic Church, different from the world around us, our faces, too, must shine. We too must maintain that spiritual glow. We may have the same basis of hope, but to make this hope alive we must give ourselves to it. "And whatsoever ye do, do it heartily as to the Lord, and not unto men" was Paul's formula for a living hope. And why? "Knowing that of the Lord ye shall receive the reward of the inheritance, for ye serve the Lord Christ" (Col. 3:23, 24). It is not our duty to go through the motions of Christianity, but to render service to God willingly and joyfully, maintaining at all times the radiance of our hope.

None of us have an easy road to travel, nor do any of us have difficulties beyond our strength. The difference between Christians is not whether

they have difficulties, obstacles and crosses to overcome, but what they do with the trials and crosses when they come. Our hope lies in strengthening the new man in such a way as to overcome the difficulties that beset us.

The Bible has acquainted us with a noble group of men and women who clung tenaciously to a faith that could not be shaken and rejoiced in a hope that could not be destroyed. They fixed their gaze ahead—far ahead. And in these days when fear shadows every scene and the whole civilized world is in the midst of a terrific struggle, we need the benefit of their experiences.

These are the days when we should take stock of ourselves.

Where is our hope?

How is our hope?

Are we weighing temporal values against those which are spiritual and basing all of our hope on the eternal?

Would we give up the fellowship, communion and love of the saints for the wealth and honor that this world has to offer?

How much does our hope mean to us?

By our actions, do we show that we believe that money will buy the knowledge that will lead to the tree of life, beyond this veil of mortality?

As the evening shadows stretch out, we should lose no time in getting the viewpoint of those holy men who were authorities on values that are genuine. These men have warned us that the things that are seen are temporal; only the things that are not seen are eternal.

Paul's hope came from his profound conviction, which grew out of his experiences in serving God. At nothing was he daunted. Whether he lived in comfort or hardship, danger or joy, his objective was to do well the task set before him. He received his help "through Christ" who strengthened him. He had difficulties which he gladly would have had taken away; but God's answer was, "My grace is sufficient for thee." The great problems of his life were solved not by withdrawal but by head-on attack with the strength to overcome them. And this was the power of hope.

Some time ago, Dr. L. P. Jacks published a book under the title, *The Lost Radiance of the Christian Religion*. In this book, Dr. Jacks recognizes that religion today has lost much of its appeal and attractiveness. He says we have lost the brightness and radiant energy of Christianity to a much colder and meaningless conception of God, of man, and of the universe. We no longer have the radiant zeal of Paul, the energy of a possessing hope. Paul's was a hope that took command of

all the forces of his being, transfiguring everything till all of his motives and desires were akindle and aglow with the fire and energy of that central flame, with its loves, its peace, its joy. He had one flaming ambition: "If by any means I might attain unto the resurrection of the dead."

Dr. Jacks writes, "We realize only too well that the fires of our religious enthusiasm are at least banked."

A minister, commenting on this loss of religious radiance, says: "The pagan and materialistic atmosphere has affected church life. . . . This spirit of materialism has repressed our religious zeal. We live in an atmosphere of paganism."

He continues: "Some have lost faith in their product. The other day a man came to my door trying to sell brooms. His first statement was, 'You don't want to buy any brooms, do you?' He was thinking in the negative. He had lost faith in his product, and in his ability to sell it. The reason why some people cannot 'sell' religion today is because they have lost faith in their product. And they have no samples to show! A famous actor once addressed a group of Christian workers in one of our cities. Among other

things he said, 'The difference between actors and Christian workers is this—we speak fiction as though it were truth, and you speak truth as though it were fiction.' He was right."

And indeed he was. The actor speaks out as though what he is saying were true; he delivers his message with feeling and meaning. Many professing Christians, however, speak truth as though it were fiction. It has no transforming power over them; they lack that radiance of divine truth. Paul said the gospel of Jesus Christ is the power of God unto salvation unto everyone that believeth, but it does not have that power to those who refuse to believe it.

The minister then climaxes his thought: "The lost radiance of the Christian religion! Dimmed by the fog of ignorance. Tarnished by sin. Rusted by indifference!"

Is this our faith, we who have the gospel of Christ in its purity? Does our hope show any rust of sin or tarnish of indifference?

What zeal we as true believers in the Christian hope should radiate before the world! A writer, speaking of the early Christians, said that they felt themselves in the grip of a will not their own. And should not we who, like them,

---

## *Let Us Pray . . .*

Our loving Father, Thou to whom all flesh must come, Thou Preserver of all men, and Saviour of all who believe. We thank Thee again for Thy kindness and mercy that has been so constant to us as we have journeyed through life.

We thank Thee for Thy longsuffering in still giving us more time to fulfill our sacred covenant with Thee when so often we have failed to keep our word, and have walked in a way that is not good in Thy sight.

We thank Thee for our sublime hope of sharing endless bliss in Thy Kingdom, and of living on and on through endless ages. Help us to gladly make sacrifices, bear crosses, perform unpleasant duties, in hope of gaining those future rewards. May we not seek ease, comfort, wealth, human honor or acclaim. Alert us that now is the time to work; rest and ease will come later. May we be willing to bide Thy time, not to seek great things for ourselves during this short day of preparation; not to seek the honor and plaudits of men or of one another.

Help us to add to our daily living the basic Christian principles of love for one another, patience, forbearance, kindness, charity. May we always remember that Christianity begins at home, that if we do not love our brother or sister whom we have seen, it is but an empty profession to say we love Thee, whom we have not seen. Give us a clearer vision to see our own errors; give us the honesty to admit our failures, and the spiritual vitality to re-adjust our whole attitude toward life, that like our great Pattern and Example our sole purpose may be to do Thy will.

We know that the spirit ever wars against the flesh, and the flesh against the spirit, and that if we slacken our vigil in any degree we shall jeopardize our chances of gaining eternal life. Help us to be more apprehensive, more fearful, lest through some careless or indifferent act we fail to obey Thy law in some small detail, and so fail to qualify for the endless reward prepared for all who have striven worthily.

Forgive us for the sins we have confessed and forsaken, and give us strength to banish from our lives every imperfection, that we may help others onward and upward, and with them gain a place in Thy soon coming Kingdom, for which we pray. Amen.



have been called to glory and honor and virtue be gripped by a higher will? We are not our own; we have consecrated ourselves, our all, yes, all we have and are, to the mighty God of heaven.

Paul felt that he was gripped by this power. "I therefore, the prisoner of the Lord, beseech you that ye walk worthy of the vocation wherewith ye are called" (Eph. 4:1-2). He did it. God's Word came to him with power, a strong, transforming power. It restrained him from doing the things he naturally would (Gal. 5:16-17); it impelled him to crucify his flesh, with its affections and lusts (Gal. 5:24); it constrained him to walk worthy of the Lord unto all pleasing, fruitful in every good work (Col. 1:9-10). And as a result, he radiated a spiritual glow.

E. Stanley Jones once credited the lack of the power of religion in the world today to our having been "inoculated with a mild form of Christianity so that we have become immune to the real thing." Many are so absorbed with their own interests, ambitions and pleasures; with their politics, sports, entertainments, and the passing concerns of this present life that they are satisfied with only a form of religion.

A minister once noted the contrast between the first century Church and the church of today: "The interior of the Apostolic Church was . . . entirely different from the mood of the church today. There was a spirit of expectancy in that church which we do not possess. There was a hope then which we have lost. There was a mood of anticipation to which we are strangers. . . . The face of that church shone; our faces do not shine. . . . We do not say to one another, 'Maranatha.' We seldom think of His coming. . . . We are intense about certain things, but not about our religion. The present world is amazingly attractive and it absorbs all of our strength and time. It is a difficult world to manage and we have no time for any other."

Is this true of us? Are we so concerned with the present that we have no time to give to the service of our King?

If one were about to embark on a business enterprise or profession which he felt certain would yield him great returns, he would be so absorbed with it that it would be the joy of his life and the topic of his conversation. Everyone he contacted would know of his interest in it.

And if all enraptured by the hope of sharing the blessings of the world to come, of being delivered from this bondage of mortality and saved eternally in God's coming Kingdom, should not we be equally radiant, speaking forth of the hope and joy that fills our heart?

Indeed, without this same spirit animating us, how can we hope to complete our work of building a Christian character? Only when we are animated with an overpowering zeal for God can or will we concentrate our full energy on the task of subduing ourself.

The Word of God was in Jeremiah's heart, as he described it, "a burning fire shut up in my bones" (Jer. 20:9); to Paul it was a power that "worketh in me mightily" (Col. 1:29); to David it was a zeal which consumed. And shall it be any less to us?

Jesus expressed His disdain of all unenthusiastic laborers: "I know thy works, that thou art neither cold or hot. I would that thou wert cold or hot. So then because thou art lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will spew thee out of my mouth" (Rev. 3:15-16).

Paul's message, his life and example, is a challenge to us today to rejoice in God's promises and lift ourselves above that which has brought the world down the pathway to a false hope.

As Paul saw them, the whole of the Scriptures were "written for our own instruction, in order that through the encouragement they give us we may maintain our hope with fortitude. . . . May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in your faith, that by the power of the Holy Spirit, your whole life and outlook may be radiant with hope" (Rom. 15:3, 13, NEB and Phillips).

Daniel maintained his radiance even in Babylon. He who heard from the angel Gabriel "Thou art greatly beloved" was too high, too great to let petty, insignificant things find even a lodging in his noble mind. He never allowed the things of this life to dull the luster of his faith.

Jesus did not say to His apostles, *Ye have* the light of the world, but rather, "*Ye are* the light of the world." Not that their minds were to store it; their lives were to *show* it! They were to be radiant, as was their Master, the "Sun of righteousness."

Let us lay hold upon this brilliant hope provided us in the Word of God; let us keep it as an anchor to our souls both sure and steadfast. God has offered us eternal life in endless bliss and glory; He has promised to do for us exceedingly abundantly above all that we can ask or think. Let us be all enthused about this hope, so enthused that we will not forget it during the busiest or most trying moments of our lives. Let us be all on fire for the great things which God has promised, until they will be in our bones as a fire that cannot be quenched. Let us keep our whole life and outlook radiant with hope, until that glorious hope has become a solid reality. ●●

# Does God Seek Man

or

## Does Man Seek God?

**G**OD, being the Creator of the universe and of man, is in a position to completely control man's destiny if He should choose to do so.

In a broad sense, He does just that. The earth was created for man. In due time, God placed man upon earth; and when man had attained the necessary intellectual status, God revealed Himself to man (at the time, Adam). God also revealed His plan, whereby mortal man could have his life perpetuated eternally on this earth.

Previous to this, man did not know God. Man did, however, feel the need for a higher power than he possessed. He realized to a greater or lesser degree his limitations. To satisfy this need he created his own gods—gods of wood, stone, animals and other objects. The Romans practiced communal and individual worship of such gods. The Egyptians venerated deceased members of the ruling dynasty. The Japanese worshiped members of the imperial family as gods. The Greeks worshiped many gods and goddesses, some of which they claimed possessed the baser passions of human nature. All of these practices of savage, semi-civilized or civilized peoples reflect a craving or desire for a supreme being.

The status of all these objects of worship is best described by the apostle Paul in his address to the Athenians from Mar's Hill when he said, "For as I passed by, and beheld your devotions, I found an altar with this inscription, TO THE UNKNOWN GOD. Whom therefore ye ignorantly worship, him declare I unto you."

Today in our modern sophisticated society, the true First Cause, or God, is replaced not by idols of wood or stone but by material things and a desire for them; by possessions and accomplishments, and one's pride in them. This has resulted in an atheistic philosophy which is leading man down a blind alley where dope, drugs and free love offer the only escape and where its victims cry, "Stop the world, I want to get off."

God might be said to be in the position of the chief executive of a large corporation opening a new plant (this earth), as He first reveals Himself to men. As such an executive, He requires a

competent team to manage this new plant. When He finds a man especially suited to His purpose, He goes after him. In this way, God seeks man. Examples of such seeking of men include God's call to Adam, Abraham, Moses, Saul, David, the apostle Paul, and others. Not all those called proved capable. King Saul, for one, proved himself a disappointment and unworthy of the call. The fact that God calls a man does not mean that man will serve faithfully. He could if he would; but due to his own negligence, he may fail.

Besides seeking specific men for His requirements, God also sends out a general call to all who care to answer. He specifies the conditions of employment, and the compensation, leaving every individual to decide whether or not he will work for Him.

Bishop Fulton Sheen once wrote a newspaper article with the following caption, "Seek God? No. He Seeks You." Taking this position puts too much responsibility on God, and too little on man. Of course, we cannot deny that God being the Creator and Employer must make His offer known. In that respect, He does seek man. But that does not relieve man of the responsibility of seeking God if he is interested in obtaining future life, life beyond what God has allotted in this mortal existence.

Let us examine the writings of some of the inspired men of old to see how they felt about the relationship between God and man. Moses, exhorting the Children of Israel, warned them of their fate if they forsook God and reverted to idol worship; then he said (Deut. 4:29), "But if from thence, thou shalt seek the Lord thy God, thou shalt find him, if thou seek him with all thy heart and with all thy soul."

King David in a solemn charge to his son Solomon, after exhorting him to serve the Lord, said, "If thou seek him, he will be found of thee; but if thou forsake him, he will cast thee off for ever" (I Chron. 28:9). God's graciousness to Solomon would depend on Solomon's faithfulness to God.

David said again, in Psalm 14:2, "The Lord



looked down from heaven upon the children of men, to see if there were any that did understand and seek God." This statement indicates that God expected man to be seeking Him. When David cried unto the Lord, the Lord said, "Seek ye my face"; David replied, "Thy face, Lord, will I seek" (Ps. 27:8). In Psalm 63:1, we again see man seeking God. "O God, thou art my God; early will I seek thee: my soul thirsteth for thee, my flesh longeth for thee in a dry and thirsty land, where no water is."

Jeremiah pictured man seeking God: "And ye shall seek me, and find me, when ye shall search for me with all your heart" (Jer. 29:13). More than casual seeking was needed—one should seek *with all his heart*.

God, speaking through Solomon, said, "I love them that love me; and those that seek me early shall find me" (Prov. 8:17).

Amos makes the following concise statement: "For thus saith the Lord unto the house of Israel, Seek ye me, and ye shall live" (Amos 5:4).

The patriarch Job found it necessary to seek God: "I would seek unto God, and unto God would I commit my cause: which doeth great things and unsearchable; marvellous things without number" (Job 5:8).

These statements and many more in Scripture prove to us that the burden of seeking rests upon man. In other words, man is required to seek God if he wishes what God has to offer—a future life free from the limitations and drawbacks of this present life. The Bible does not teach that God has such love for all His human creation that He pursues them and bestows immortality indiscriminately regardless of the character or desires of the persons themselves. This is a pleasing doctrine and widely accepted; but it is not reasonable, and it is not Scriptural. It is first and last the product of man's imagination.

God is love. God loves the members of His earthly family when they make themselves worthy of that love. He demonstrates His goodness first in giving life, food, and the necessities of life. He demonstrates further His love by offering a much better existence free from sorrow, sickness, pain and death, for those who wish to avail themselves of its blessings. He furnishes assistance to everyone who desires it. In simple words, God does for us what we cannot do for ourselves. Here God's responsibility ends and man's begins.

Man can seek God, or he can run away from Him (or *try* to run away). Many foolish men feel they do not need God, but this is only a delusion. The further they get from God, the more hopeless and helpless they become. The wise will

follow the advice of the prophet Amos and "Seek him that maketh the seven stars and Orion, and turneth the shadow of death into the morning, and maketh the day dark with night: that calleth for the waters of the sea, and poureth them out upon the face of the earth: The Lord is his name." ●●

## Non-Retaliation

MAN has always been an expert in evasion. We tend to blame others for our sins. When God confronted Adam with his sin, Adam's reply was, "The woman whom you gave to be with me, she gave me of the tree, and I ate." And when God challenged Eve with her action, her answer was, "The serpent beguiled me, and I ate." Adam said, Don't blame me, blame Eve. Eve said, Don't blame me; blame the serpent. But they could not fool God; each had given in to his or her own inner desires.

Robert Burns wrote:

*Thou know'st that thou hast formed me  
With passions wild and strong;  
And list'ning to their 'witching voice  
Has often led me wrong.*

Of course there are rare people who—even when someone has severely criticized, rightly or wrongly—can still think clearly and without malice return good in the face of evil. Such a man was Robert E. Lee. It is said that in the early days of the Civil War, Robert E. Lee was severely criticized by a General Whiting. It might have been expected that Lee would seize any opportunity to get even with Whiting.

The opportunity presented itself when Jefferson Davis called Lee in for consultation. Davis wanted to know what Lee thought of General Whiting. Without hesitation Lee commended him in high terms and called him one of the ablest men in the Army. Afterwards, a fellow-officer took Lee aside and wanted to know why he had not told Davis the things Whiting had said about him. Lee answered: "It was my understanding that the President wanted to know my opinion of Whiting, not Whiting's opinion of me."

To be able to do this sort of thing when the natural mind would retaliate takes control, a generous heart and a strong character.

We as followers of Christ must develop this type of attitude. Matthew 5:44 says, "Do good unto them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you and persecute you." ●●

—Contributed

From  
*John the Elder*



Third in a Series on the Epistle of First John

## "That Ye Sin Not"

### A Study of I John 2:1-14

IN THE second chapter of John's First Epistle, the Apostle continues to check our spiritual condition. Remember, he is addressing us as well as the Christians of his day. Notice his affectionate tenderness and earnest spiritual desire for his brethren as he writes.

*"My little children, these things write I unto you, that ye sin not" (I John 2:1).*

John uses the term "little children" when addressing his brethren, especially when he is warning them against sin. Such brotherly kindness always makes the work of righteousness easier.

"That ye sin not." The wise Elder knows how much easier it is to prevent sin than to put it away after it is established. How much do we do in our daily lives to keep ourselves from sin? How much do we do to help others not to sin? One of the worst sins is to cause sin in another; we do this by allowing ourselves to sin.

The little word "no" pays great dividends when used firmly at the first awareness of temptation. It can keep us—and others—from sin.

*"... If any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous" (v. 1).*

John does not say, "If any one goes on sinning"; he says, "If any man sin," suggesting that those to whom he writes are not going on in sin wilfully. They are men and women who are making a serious effort to live without sin.

But walking in righteousness without any sin is a gradual attainment; when the light of God first shines upon our path, we do not walk in its fullness all at once. We must try, and keep trying. That is why, when we do sin, we "need an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous." God is ready to help us, and His angels minister

to us. But we need an advocate, one who sustains a relationship of intimacy with the Father, who is concerned with us and can communicate with the Father in our behalf.

In doing this, says John, in serving as our mediator and one to whom we can look for cleansing and forgiveness when we repent, Christ becomes "the propitiation for our sins" (v. 2). By "propitiation," John is not referring to Jesus' death on the cross as a sacrifice in our behalf, as if that would appease God or do anything to blot out our sins. If this were so, there would be no need of an advocate when we sin: our guilt would have been already wiped out. The Concordant Version uses the word "concern" in place of propitiation, which harmonizes with the role of Christ as advocate. "He is the propitiatory shelter concerned with our sins, yet not concerned with ours only, but concerned with the whole world also" (Concordant).

Christ is our propitiation in that through Him we may obtain forgiveness, inasmuch as He serves as our advocate or mediator with the Father; thus our sin may be annulled (if we truly have our mind set on living in obedience to the commandments of God henceforth).

Often the idea of "expiation" is associated with "propitiation," as though God needed in some way to be "appeased"; but as one commentator says, "the idea of propitiating or appeasing God is foreign to the New Testament." John clearly defines the right means of approach: it is through Christ our advocate; and to approach by Him means to bring ourselves into union with Him, reflecting in our own lives His holiness and His righteousness. Only as we do this can He serve as our "advocate."

The righteous Christ will present no case which justice does not approve. Christ is not a pro-

propitiation nor an advocate for the obstinate and rebellious; neither Christ nor God are going to forgive those who repel the light or reject His call to obedience. John makes clear *our* responsibility. Remember, he is writing all this "that ye sin not" (2:1).

John continues by outlining a series of tests by which each one who reads may discover whether or not he is genuinely "in Christ." Let each of us look well to himself.

*"And hereby we do know that we know him, if we keep his commandments. He that saith, I know him, and keepeth not his commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him."*

*"But whoso keepeth his word, in him verily is the love of God perfected: hereby know we that we are in him"* (2:3-5).

John now passes beyond the negative command—"that ye sin not"—to the positive of "keep his commandments," introducing the idea that obedience to Christ's commands is the supreme evidence of every believer's faith. The high-sounding "fellowship with God" has down-to-earth expression in obedience to actual commandment. We know Christ only as we obey Him.

A Christian is one in whom truth *lives*. Christianity is more than talking about truth; we know as we obey; we know Christ as we keep His commandments. The knowledge of God is not primarily intellectual; it is practical. The truth is said to be in a man when it acts within him as a principle regulating his thoughts and actions. We are in the truth when it is the sphere in which we move. For such a life there is propitiation with God; there is no propitiation for the one who pretends to know but in reality is a liar, not keeping the commandments.

The Gnostics, against whom John was warning his brethren, claimed mystical knowledge of God and special revelations as the ultimate in religious experience. For them, salvation was largely achieved through special knowledge. John insists that knowledge of Christ is not found in transports of mystical adoration; it becomes real only in everyday obedience to Christ's commands. Love is brought to fruition only in him who keeps Christ's words. There is no such thing as love which is not expressed in obedience. Every member of the fellowship of Christ must model his daily life after the life of Christ, else he is what John calls "a liar, and the truth is not in him" (2:4).

*"He that saith he abideth in him ought himself also so to walk, even as he walked"* (2:6).

John says we ought to walk as Jesus walked;

indeed, we ought to. Let us ask ourselves every day, every hour: Would Jesus do what I am doing? Would He talk as I talk? Would He go where I go? Would He watch or listen to the things that I watch or listen to? Would He read what I read?

Men and women need the inspiration of a living, Christlike example, and it is the duty of each of us to *be* that example. We can draw more people to God by what we do than by what we say.

Continuing his letter, John speaks of a commandment which is both old and new at the same time:

*"Brethren, I write no new commandment unto you, but an old commandment which ye had from the beginning. The old commandment is the word which ye have heard from the beginning."*

*"Again, a new commandment I write unto you, which thing is true in him and in you because the darkness is past, and the true light now shineth"* (2:7-8).

No doubt this "beloved disciple" was thinking of the words he and his fellow disciples had heard that last night in the upper room: "A new commandment I give unto you, that ye love one another; as I have loved you, that ye also love one another" (John 13:34-35). This commandment was old in the sense that it had been a long time in existence. Was it not a part of the ancient law? "Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself" (Lev. 19:18).

But when Jesus came showing the meaning of true love made alive in life, the command became new. It had a living freshness. Jesus gave it meaning and breadth and depth. It came alive. It was no longer only an outward form—it was an inner power. It changed a person altogether. Love as Jesus taught it was love through and through. There were no dark corners in which hate could hide in the heart possessing this divine love.

John had heard those words the night of the Last Supper; but only after he had experienced the impact of Christ's death, the lift of His resurrection, and the thrust of His power bestowed on them at Pentecost could he begin to fully understand. Looking back now, John could see how all of Jesus' teaching concerning "love"—that love which is pure devotion to the highest good, that love which is the noblest form of obedience—was "true in him" (v. 8). And now John realizes how this same love may be "true" in his own life and in the life of each of his brethren as they live in obedience to the commands of Christ: "which thing is true in him and in you because the darkness is past, and the true light now shineth" (v. 8).

This last statement shows the reality of the living commandment. The commandment is no dead statute laid away in a dust-covered book. Its reality can be seen in the result of its working: the "darkness" (of sin and evil) is passing away (in the lives of those who live by the commandment), and as a result the "true light," the reflection of that light which shone in the life of Jesus, "is shining."

John now tells who are in the light or in the dark by using the issues of love and hate.

*"He that saith he is in the light, and hateth his brother, is in darkness even until now. He that loveth his brother abideth in the light, and there is none occasion of stumbling in him. But he that hateth his brother is in darkness, and walketh in darkness, and knoweth not whither he goeth, because that darkness hath blinded his eyes" (2:9-11).*

Here is the commandment of love as it applies to our relationship with our Christian brother. There is no place for indifference. The line of demarcation is sharp and decisive. Man is either in the light or in darkness. There is no twilight zone. The test is: "He that hateth his brother is in darkness," and "He that loveth his brother abideth in the light." Light is the revealing power of perception and recognition, of understanding and fellowship; he who says he is in the light and hates his brother actually knows nothing of these things; he is still in unregenerate man's native sphere, still "dead in trespasses and sins" (Eph. 2:1).

Let us examine ourselves. Where are we—in darkness, or in light? How do we regard our brother? Do we think of his needs, his welfare, his salvation? Do we delight to serve him, fellowship with him, or do we think of him as a hindrance to our plans and inferior to our intellectual attainment? Perhaps we regard him as an enemy or a competitor who gets in our way. Into which category would John place us? Do we love or hate our brother? By John's test, are we walking in light or in darkness?

John tries to inspire confidence in those to whom he is writing. He who walks in the light (by manifesting divine love in his life) is able to walk without "stumbling" (v. 10). But he who is devoid of this light (or loving obedience) "knoweth not whither he goeth" (v. 11). Hatred blinds as surely as love illumines.

John has warned his brethren against sin and against that hypocrisy which pretends to know God and yet walks in darkness; he has reminded them to love one another, according to the old commandment and the new. He has told them of

the blessedness of the light and the wretchedness of those who walk in darkness. Now he pauses in his discourse to address them personally once again:

"I write unto you, little children, because your sins are forgiven you for his name's sake.

"I write unto you, fathers, because ye have known him that is from the beginning. I write unto you, young men, because ye have overcome the wicked one. I write unto you, little children, because ye have known the Father.

*"I have written unto you, fathers, because ye have known him that is from the beginning. I have written unto you, young men, because ye are strong, and the word of God abideth in you, and ye have overcome the wicked one" (2:12-14).*

At this point John breaks away from his stern tone and warnings against false brethren to address himself in endearing terms to the faithful members of the fellowship of believers. First he addresses them all as "little children," then he seems to address them more specifically according to age groups, "Fathers" is a tribute to the older and more mature Christians on the strength of their knowledge and experience in the faith; the "young men" are younger believers, who are less mature but no less earnest—John commends them for their demonstration of spiritual strength.

The Elder is most earnest in reminding all of the saving knowledge which they possess. And he urges them all to nobler efforts, appealing to the best that is in them. His words show a warm enthusiasm and affectionate attachment that he felt toward them. They "stand forgiven" for victories they have won.

Mature Christians, who have known God for a long time, may through their Christian experience and wisdom be a great aid and influence for good. And young people, such as John addresses and highly commends—who have "the word of God abiding" in them, and who are consecrating their energetic vigor to the divine end—also strengthen the fellowship. Some of John's young brethren had manifested strong moral courage in fleeing youthful lusts; but there is more warfare ahead. ●●

(Next Issue: LOVE NOT THE WORLD)

---

*To live by law, acting the law we live by without fear,  
And, because right is right, to follow right,  
Were wisdom, in the scorn of consequence.*



# UNDERSTANDING THE BIBLE

"Study to shew thyself approved unto God."

## The Sabbath of the Bible

**I**SRAEL went down into Egypt as a family clan numbering seventy souls. Some 400 years later they had become a vast horde of uneducated, uncivilized slaves estimated to number more than three million. The kind Pharaoh who had given them land in Goshen had died, and another king arose "who knew not Joseph." Life became a round of ceaseless toil under the lash of hard-hearted taskmasters. Seven days a week they were forced to labor in the fields and brick-kilns of Egypt.

But when God decreed that they should depart, all this became history. They were no longer slaves to the Egyptians, but free men and women returning to the homeland they had never seen.

Now they were a month into their journey, safely across the Red Sea, headed for Canaan. It was springtime, and it was hot; and their uncouth manners soon surfaced. Their miraculous deliverance was far from their minds, and they murmured and said, "Would to God we had died by the hand of the Lord in the land of Egypt, . . . when we did eat bread to the full; for ye have brought us forth into this wilderness, to kill this whole assembly with hunger" (Ex. 16:3). They had lost faith in their God-appointed leader. But God had not lost faith in them. He would complete the task He had begun and would give them His Law to civilize and educate them. He would feed them, protect them and guide them through the Wilderness.

It was in answer to their complaint that God sent the manna to feed them, and it was in connection with the giving of the manna that God first commanded them to rest one day in seven. They would find manna on six days of each week, but on the seventh there would be none. On the sixth day they were to gather sufficient for the seventh.

Seeing the people gathering extra portions of manna, the rulers of the congregation came to

Moses to inquire. "And he [Moses] said unto them, This is that which the Lord hath said, Tomorrow is the rest of the holy sabbath unto the Lord: bake that which ye will bake today, and seethe that ye will seethe; and that which remaineth over lay up for you to be kept until the morning . . . Six days ye shall gather it; but on the seventh day, which is the sabbath, in it there shall be none. . . . So the people rested on the seventh day" (Ex. 16:23, 26, 30).

This is the first mention of the sabbath in the Scriptures. The word derives from the Hebrew **shabbath** meaning "cessation from labor, rest." God was commanding that they rest from their labors on the seventh day, but their duty concerning the day was not made known until Moses received the Law at Sinai.

The same command was incorporated in the Ten Commandment Law without added emphasis: "Remember the sabbath day, to keep it holy. Six days shalt thou labor, and do all thy work: But the seventh day is the sabbath of the Lord thy God: in it thou shalt not do any work, thou, nor thy son, nor thy daughter, thy manservant, nor thy maidservant, nor thy cattle, nor thy stranger that is within thy gates: For in six days the Lord made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that in them is, and rested the seventh day: wherefore the Lord blessed the sabbath day, and hallowed it" (Ex. 20:8-11).

These words, recognized as the Fourth Commandment, have been the basis of a long-standing controversy in religious circles. There can be no question that they were part of the Law given to Moses for Israel. But were they also spoken for us of these latter days? Are they of greater import than other commands of the Law? Are we under the Law today? If we fail to keep the seventh-day Sabbath, are we breaking God's law?

In this study we will examine the arguments of some well-known seventh-day Sabbath believers and compare them with the unerring Word of God in order to determine the true teaching of the Bible on the subject.

## 1. Present-Day SABBATH BELIEFS

For most major religious bodies, Sunday is accepted as the proper day for rest and worship—not that it is kept inviolate, but it is acknowledged as proper. But for a very vocal minority, the Sabbatharians, Sunday worship borders on heresy; it is breaking the Fourth Commandment—and this broken command, they feel, renders a man guilty before God.

Numbered among present-day Sabbatharians are most Jews, plus some Protestant groups, including the Adventists, the Worldwide Church of God, the Church of God (Seventh Day), and numerous other smaller cults. We will examine some of their basic beliefs concerning the Sabbath.

### A. Theories of the Sabbath

A major point of contention between seventh-day Sabbath keepers and Sunday worshipers concerns the point of the origin of the Sabbath. Seventh-day keepers claim that the Sabbath was instituted at the time of the creation of the earth.

In Genesis 2:2-3 we read that "On the seventh day God ended his work which he had made; and he rested on the seventh day from all his work which he had made. And God blessed the seventh day, and sanctified it: because that in it he had rested from all his work which God created and made." Here, it is claimed, God was instituting the Sabbath, setting apart the seventh day for Himself to be kept as a memorial of the creation.

We will note what some churches say concerning the origin of the Sabbath. (*Answers to these claims will follow in section "B" of our outline. See below.*)

**1. The Church of God (Seventh Day).** Among thirty-five reasons for keeping the seventh-day Sabbath we find these statements:

- a. God rested from His labors on the seventh day (Gen. 2:2).
- b. God blessed the seventh day because on it He rested from the work of creation. God not only blessed the seventh day, but He also sanctified it (Gen. 2:2-3).
- c. God's people kept the Sabbath before the Ten Commandments were given on Mount Sinai.

It is further stated by the Church of God that "the Ten Commandments, including the Sabbath, were a part of creation and existed before the time the tables of stones were given on Mount Sinai (Ex. 16:23, 29). God desires the worship of His people, and it is reasonable to say that

He gave the Sabbath at creation for the good of mankind, that they might enjoy blessed fellowship on His holy day. Jesus referred to the Sabbath in that way when He said, 'The Sabbath was made for man, and not man for the Sabbath' (Mark 2:27)." (We will discuss these points later in this article.)

**2. The Seventh Day Adventist Church.** The point of the Adventists is similar to that of the Church of God. An Adventist publication describes the Sabbath as having been "created" by God Himself, explaining that "When God finished His work of creation, He pronounced it a very good work. Then, through three distinct acts, God created the Sabbath as an eternal memorial to His creative power and His purpose for man. First, He rested when he had finished His work. . . . He entered into a new and unique activity by taking time to enjoy that which He had created, to look with pleasure upon His perfect, finished work. Then, He blessed. The angels were able to enter into His joy that first Sabbath because God blessed the seventh day. Then, He sanctified it. God's final act in creating the Sabbath was to sanctify it, to set it apart for holy use."

It is further stated that "it was most fitting indeed that God should thus give this institution to our first parents. Busied as they were during the week with the work to which their Creator had assigned them, it was appropriate that they should have a day of rest in which they could turn their minds more fully to God."

Adventists claim that God's people had known of His Sabbath before, but during their bondage in Egypt had lost sight of it. "God did not originate the Sabbath at Sinai as some have suggested. The fourth commandment makes perfectly clear the immutable fact that God created the Sabbath at creation as a memorial for all mankind." And in addition, they claim that the seven-day cycle has never been lost, that it has been kept continuously from the very beginning.

**3. The Worldwide Church of God.** Herbert W. Armstrong, founder of that church, holds to a similar position, which he states with the added emphasis of capital letters and exclamation points. I quote from his book:

"Jesus said, 'The sabbath was made.' . . . It had to have a MAKER. Who, then made the Sabbath?

"God is the Creator. But it is written in Ephesians 3:9, 'God, who created all things by Jesus Christ.' [Using John 1, Mr. Armstrong draws the conclusion that the Word was Christ and says "Christ was with God the Father from eternity.]

"Christ was God! ALL THINGS WERE MADE BY HIM—Jesus Christ! The Sabbath is one of those things that was MADE. So it was Jesus Christ who MADE the Sabbath. God made it through Jesus Christ or by Him!

"Very few realize it today—but the Sabbath was MADE BY JESUS CHRIST! No wonder, then, He said plainly that He is LORD also of the Sabbath!

"... Now when was this? Verse 31 [Genesis 1] says it was the sixth day of creation week. . . . Man came into being, then, probably in the late afternoon of the sixth day. 'And on the seventh day God ended his work which he had made; and he rested on the seventh day from all his work which he had made. And God blessed the seventh day, and sanctified it . . .' HE MADE the Sabbath on that day by *resting*, whereas He had made all other things by *working*!""\*

### B. Answers to Theories of the Sabbath

Seventh-day Sabbath believers contend that the Sabbath was instituted at the time of the creation when God is said to have rested from all His labors. But was this "rest" the establishing of the weekly day of rest? Was the seventh day kept as a day of rest from that time to the present without a break, as claimed by some?

Let us go to the Bible to learn the answers.

**1. God's rest on the seventh day.** There is nothing in the Bible to indicate that God was here establishing the Sabbath rest. Nowhere in Genesis do we find that God commanded the people to rest every seventh day. The verse states that God rested (Gen. 2:2), but it says nothing about the Sabbath, nor does the verse command anyone else to rest.

Those who use Genesis 2 for evidence of the origin of the seventh-day Sabbath accept the narrative of the creation as a literal event that took place in six 24-hour days. In the light of scientific knowledge, such a position is untenable.

The creation story of Genesis is much more meaningful when viewed not as a literal account but as an allegory. To try to pinpoint the creation as having occurred only 6,000 years ago and in six literal days is unreasonable. When we accept the whole account as an allegory, it becomes understandable.

Briefly stated, the Genesis allegory outlines God's plan for this earth. The plan begins when

He first calls men to work for Him—in Adam's time—and continues throughout six one-thousand-year days during which God is said to "work," taking out a people for Himself who will form the "new heavens" and "new earth," the new rulers and subjects of His future Kingdom on earth.

On the seventh day, a type of the thousand-year day of the Millennium, God is said to rest from His labors while Christ and the saints "work" or reign over the "new" earth. It is this Millennial "day" that God sanctified, or set apart for His people, and blessed. This is the greater seventh day, of which the Sabbath was a pattern (see Ex. 20:11). This is the Sabbath that will be the close of God's long creative work on earth. (For further discussion of this subject, refer to our booklet, *God's Spiritual Creation*, available upon request.)

**2. The Sabbath kept from Adam to Moses?** Sabbatarians claim that the Sabbath was kept perpetually throughout this space of time—approximately 2500 years.

Such a claim is pure speculation. The Bible record gives no evidence whatever that the Sabbath was observed by man before Israel was commanded to observe it when they were in the wilderness. Nehemiah leaves no question as to when the Sabbath was instituted: "Thou camest down also upon Mount Sinai, and spakest with them from heaven, and gavest them right judgments, and true laws, good statutes and commandments: and madest known unto them thy holy sabbath, . . . by the hand of Moses, thy servant" (Neh. 9:13-14). The Sabbath was given as a part of the Law given to Moses for Israel.

Also, in the words of one Bible student, "It is incredible that this great institution of the sabbath could have existed during all those centuries and there be no mention of it in the Scriptures dealing with that time. . . . It is impossible that the Sabbath could have been kept during this time and not once be mentioned."

Bible history covering this period gives a reasonably complete account of the religious customs and worship of the patriarchs such as Noah, Abraham, Isaac, Jacob and Joseph. It tells about circumcision, the altar and sacrifices, tithing, etc.—but never a word is said about keeping the Sabbath or not keeping it. Those who would claim that the Sabbath has been kept since creation make the claim without any proof whatever from the Scriptures. A careful study of the Bible gives no hint of any Sabbath observance between Adam and Moses.

**3. The seven-day cycle never lost?** Adventists make the claim that the seven-day cycle has

---

\*Which Day is the Christian Sabbath? by H. W. Armstrong, pp. 22-25.

never been broken, that the Sabbath has been kept by the true people of God perpetually since the beginning, and that our Saturday corresponds with the old seventh-day Sabbath.

The seventh day according to the Jewish calendar could not possibly correspond with our Saturday. Theirs was a lunar calendar with the first day of the new year also being the first day of the month Abib and also the first day of the week (see Lev. 23). Since the number of days in the year was not evenly divisible by seven, the Sabbath days would not be the same each year.

4. **The Sabbath made by Jesus Christ?** No, neither the Sabbath nor the earth were created by Jesus Christ. To accept such a statement infers a pre-existent nature of Christ. We cannot accept such a statement because it contradicts plain teachings of the Bible. Christ was "born of a woman." How could He have existed before the woman of whom He was born?

Jesus is Lord of the Sabbath because His law supercedes the old Law and takes preference over it. Throughout His ministry He showed His disregard of the Jewish Sabbath restrictions, demonstrating that it was acceptable to do good on any day. This is why Jesus said that the "Son of man is Lord also of the Sabbath," and "the sabbath was made for man, and not man for the sabbath" (Mark 2:27-28). Jesus was showing his own superiority to the law of Moses. The Sabbath law was made for man's good, for his temporal benefit, so that his life would not be one of incessant toil.

Mr. Armstrong's statement that "the Sabbath was made by Jesus Christ," is wholly without Scriptural support. It is preposterous to state that "man came into being . . . in the late afternoon of the sixth day" of creation. Man existed on this earth ages before Adam.

Mr. Armstrong cites Ephesians 3:9 to prove that Jesus created the Sabbath. The text reads that God "created all things by Jesus Christ"; but anyone consulting the original rendering of the phrase in the better manuscripts will find that the words "by Jesus Christ" have been added; they are omitted in many of the newer versions (see NEB, NIV, Berkeley, Weymouth, Goodspeed, RSV, Jerusalem Bible, TEV, etc.). Hence the text correctly reads that "God created all things," and Mr. Armstrong is left without foundation for his claim.

## II. THE SABBATH OF THE BIBLE

That the Sabbath was part of the Law given to the nation of Israel cannot be disputed. But was it given for all people of all time? No, it was an institution for the nation of Israel: "Speak thou also unto the children of Israel, saying, Verily

my sabbaths ye shall keep: for it is a sign between me and you throughout your generations; that ye may know that I am the Lord that doth sanctify you" (Ex. 31:13).

The Sabbath was something special between God and the nation of Israel. "Wherefore the children of Israel shall keep the sabbath, to observe the sabbath throughout their generations, for a perpetual covenant" (Ex. 31:16).

The Sabbath of the Bible was given to Israel as a part of the Law. It was first mentioned when the manna was given, but was later included in the Ten Commandment Law. The Sabbath is but a small part of the Law given from Sinai, and seems to have been accented above its intent. Sabbatarians view it as the most important part of the Law, but it is not given special attention in the Scriptures.

The whole law was important, as is evident from these words of Moses: "The Lord spake unto you out of the midst of the fire: . . . and he declared unto you his covenant, which he commanded you to perform, even ten commandments; and he wrote them upon two tables of stones" (Deut. 4:12-13). Israel was to keep the whole law as given, not just the Sabbath command.

The Sabbath was given to the Israelites as a reminder of their deliverance from bondage in Egypt. Moses frequently reminded them of the servitude from which they had been released: "And remember that thou wast a servant in the land of Egypt, and that the Lord thy God brought thee out thence through a mighty hand and by a stretched out arm: therefore the Lord thy God commanded thee to keep the sabbath day" (Deut. 5:15).

Ezekiel, the prophet of the captivity, reminded Israel of their deliverance and coupled it with the command to keep the Sabbath, showing that it was to be a sign of their faithfulness. At the behest of the Lord he also reminded them of their great deliverance, showing that future deliverance would be based on obedience to the God who had chosen them: "And I gave them my statutes, and showed them mine ordinances, which if a man do, he shall even live in them. Moreover, also, I gave them my sabbaths, to be a sign between me and them, that they might know that I am the Lord who sanctifieth them" (Ezek. 20:11-12, Scofield Bible). Even today a man's spirituality may be judged by his attendance at worship services; if a man becomes slack in his attendance he is soon slack in keeping the commands.

*Reprints of these studies available,  
10 cents per copy*



# Conscience--

## Dare We Trust It?

THERE IS an old adage many people take seriously: "Always let your conscience be your guide." Is this sound advice? Can you and I trust our conscience to tell us what to do?

Philosophers and thinkers for centuries have praised the human conscience. "It is a revelation of the being of a God, a divine voice in the human soul," says one, "making known the presence of its rightful sovereign, the author of the law of holiness and truth." Another has called conscience "the great beacon light God sets in all." "Whatever creed be taught or land be trod, man's conscience is the oracle of God," writes the poet.

The philosophy of the trustworthiness of conscience has been so generally accepted that moral values are often established by it. What makes a matter right or wrong, except the general conscience of the people? Decide what you should do in a given situation by how you feel at that moment (the dictates of your conscience) and you are right.

But one does not have to think very far to sense the folly of this reasoning. For who is less capable of judging a situation (especially an emotional situation) than the person involved?

Something built into every human heart that is an instinctive moderator of right may be man's idea, but it is not God's. The Bible tells us "the heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked: who can know it?" (Jer. 17:9). Of the days before the Flood, it is recorded that "God saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually" (Gen. 6:5). There is nothing in the Book to indicate that the Lord ever revised this appraisal of the natural human heart. When the apostle Paul was criticized by some of his brethren, he did not set up his own conscience as the final authority, or any other man's conscience. He humbly allowed that even his conscience, though it had been subject to many years of training, could be wrong: God was the judge. He wrote: "To me it is a very small thing that I should be examined by you, or by any human court; in fact,

I do not even examine myself [as having final authority]. I am conscious of nothing against myself, yet I am not by this acquitted; but the one who examines me is the Lord" (I Cor. 4:3-4, NAS). Even though Paul, so far as he knew, had done nothing wrong, he was not willing to trust his own judgment or set his judgment against the Lord's. He realized he *could* be wrong.

Conscience may be a safe guide if "everybody does it" is to be our standard. But if God is the final judge, we need to make sure our conscience agrees with *His*.

*Conscience is a God-given power of intellect that lets us be aware of what we do, combined with a sense of obligation to do what we feel is right. But like every other human faculty, it is only what it is trained to be.*

What the conscience feels is determined largely by environment, influence and education. The child who grows up in a home where both parents smoke regularly will not have a conscience that tells him it is wrong to smoke. The children of a savage, war-like tribe will not sense any wrong in taking human life. The mother who has lived all her life in a country where children are sacrificed to appease the wrath of some supposed deity will not object, for conscience sake, to throwing her child into the river in a time of crisis.

The word conscience comes from the Latin and means "joint knowledge," knowing with another. It implies the knowledge of two or more things at the same time.

Conscience is a mental power that helps us make judgments. It has been said, "Cowardice asks, Is it safe? Experience asks, Is it prudent? Vanity asks, Is it popular? But conscience asks, Is it right?" Conscience is judicial.

But conscience is what we make it. It can be soft and easy-going; or it can be firm and demanding. It can be hardened against sin, or it can be sensitive to sin's slightest touch.

The Bible speaks of several different kinds of conscience—which shows that conscience is only what it is trained to be.

### **A Good Conscience**

"Now the end of the commandment is charity, out of a pure heart, and of a good conscience, and of faith unfeigned" (I Tim. 1:5). A good conscience is a mind trained by the Word of God to conform to His laws. It is sensitized by what God calls right or wrong. And it is accurate, as it conforms to the Word of God, just as a clock is accurate when it conforms to the motion of the sun.

### **A Pure Conscience**

Paul wrote these words of advice to Timothy: "Likewise must the deacons be grave, not double-tongued, not given to much wine, not greedy of filthy lucre; holding the mystery of the faith in a pure conscience" (I Tim. 3:8-9). He who meets this standard—"not doubletongued," not "greedy," not guilty of any reproach—may be a safe depository for the "mystery of the faith," the Word of life.

### **A Working Conscience**

The apostle Paul described his personal effort as he stood before Felix: "Herein do I exercise myself, to have always a conscience void of offence toward God, and toward men" (Acts 24:16). He trained himself first to be sensitive to what God called wrong, and secondly to what men called wrong. He consciously trained his conscience to keep him in favor with God and, when possible, with men also.

### **An Ignorant Conscience**

"They shall put you out of the synagogues: yea, the time cometh, that whosoever killeth you will think that he doeth God service" (John 16:2). This prophecy was literally fulfilled in the apostle Paul's life. "I verily thought," he wrote in later years, "that I ought to do many things contrary to the name of Jesus of Nazareth. Which thing I also did" (Acts 26:9-10). But God did not hold this against his eternal record, because Paul did it in ignorance—an enlightened conscience is the first step toward responsibility before God.

### **A Defiled Conscience**

A conscience rightly trained for a time and then left open to be impressed by any evil that might tempt, may be called a defiled conscience. Paul wrote to Titus of this class: "Unto the pure all things are pure: but unto them that are defiled and unbelieving is nothing pure; but even their mind and conscience is defiled" (Tit. 1:15). No sign of an instinctively pure and dependable "still small voice" here!

### **A Scared Conscience**

Paul prophesied of the time when people would have no feeling for what is right or reasonable: "Now the Spirit speaketh expressly, that in the latter times some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits, and doctrines of devils; speaking lies in hypocrisy; having their conscience seared with a hot iron" (I Tim. 4:1-2).

He spoke of another class having a similar problem—so hardened to sin as to be insensible to it. "Who being past feeling have given themselves over unto lasciviousness, to work all uncleanness with greediness." Or as translated in the Jerusalem Bible, "Their sense of right and wrong once dulled, they have abandoned themselves to sexuality and eagerly pursue a career of indecency of every kind" (Eph. 4:19).

### **An Awakened Conscience**

This is the type of conscience possessed by every true believer. It is a conscience sensitive to the Word of God, and trained to recognize every tendency to sin within itself. "Then shall ye remember your own evil ways and your doings that were not good, and shall loathe yourselves in your own sight for your iniquities and for your abominations" (Ezek. 36:31).

What kind of conscience is ours? The answer is important; for if we would attain the standard of perfection we are seeking, we must be able to judge ourselves honestly and condemn ourselves when necessary. We must have our senses exercised to discern between good and evil in our own hearts and lives (Heb. 5:14), if we would banish the evil and exalt the good. We must have a warning signal within us that lights up "DANGER!" when danger is near. We must be ready and willing to acknowledge iniquity when it is in our hand, and put it far away.

If our conscience is thus trained, and we are sensitive to the least touch of sin, then "if our heart condemn us not" we may know that we are acceptable to God and will merit His eternal rewards. ●●

---

"March on, O soul, with strength,  
As strong the battle rolls!  
'Gainst lies and lusts and wrongs,  
Let courage rule our souls;  
In keenest strife, Lord, may we stand,  
Upheld and strengthened by Thy hand."



**G**OD has a wonderful lesson for us in the experience of Elisha and the widow, as recorded in Second Kings 4:1-7. The woman was destitute. She owed money to creditors, and had nothing but a single pot of oil. "What shall I do?" she asked the prophet of God.

"Borrow many pots and pans from your friends and neighbors!" he instructed. "Go into your house. . . . Then pour olive oil from your jar into the pots and pans, setting them aside as they are filled!"

She did, and she filled one after another until every container was full. Then Elisha told her, "Go and sell the oil and pay your debt, and there will be enough money left for you and your sons to live on!" (II Kings 4:1-7, TLB).

The borrowed vessels were filled with oil to provide sustenance for the widow and her family. You will notice that as long as there were vessels to be filled, the oil flowed. When there were no more vessels to fill, the oil ceased.

The Lord has a lesson to teach us in this: He keeps giving as long as we bring the vessels into which He can pour. When we stop bringing, He stops giving. We must take the first step.

God does not give us overcoming grace, but grace as we overcome.

There are three vessels that we want especially to bring in order to have the oil of God's blessings poured into us.

#### **The Vessel of Desire.**

God gives us a great many blessings in this life, but He cannot give us the hundredfold in this life plus eternal life in the future until we desire it. He never forces Himself upon anyone, and if we do not wish for His gifts we will never receive them. For instance, He cannot make a man wise unless he wishes to be instructed. God cannot make a man holy if he has no aspiration for

holiness. God cannot save a man from sin if that person holds on to his sin with both hands. God cannot bring the oil unless we bring the vessels of our hearts opened by our desires.

The Word of God tells us, "Ye have not, because ye ask not." In other words, there is no desire on your part. While God is always giving, our capacity to receive determines the degree of our individual allotment. We have as much of God's gifts as we have opened ourselves to receive.

The principal factor in settling how much we can take is how much we desire. Measure the reality and intensity of your desire for the things God has to offer, and you measure your capacity. You *have* in the measure in which you *desire*. Remember, too, that the desire which brings the fullness of God's blessings must be more than a feeble, fleeting wish. Lazily wishing and strenuously desiring are two totally different things. The former gets nothing. The latter gets everything. But the desire must not only rise to intensity and earnestness, it must also be steadfast.

#### **The Vessel of Expectancy.**

You may have heard of the people who were coming to church on a certain day to pray for rain, and along with them came a little girl with her umbrella. Desire is one thing. Confident anticipation that the desire will be fulfilled is quite another. Expectation, like desire, opens the heart.

We have expectations even in physical areas that are their own fulfillment. Doctors tell us that a very large part of the curative power of medicine depends upon the patient's anticipation of recovery. If the patient expects to recover, death will have a battle. If he expects to die when he takes to his bed, chances are that he will.

Too many of us have faint and vague imaginings of the reward God has in store for all who serve

Him faithfully. We need a deeper realization of God's goodness and of His willingness—even anxiety—to give to those who prove themselves worthy of it. It is impossible to raise our expectations too high—the Word declares that He is able to do for us exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think (Eph. 3:20).

When will this be? We are not told exactly, but if the time seems to tarry, we should not become disillusioned. Waiting time is a very real possibility. Again and again through the Bible we are exhorted to patience, endurance, steadiness in holding on. When the great things we expect do not materialize immediately, we must not become weary. It never has bothered God to keep men waiting for Him. The children of Israel had to wander forty years in the wilderness before the promise was fulfilled to them. Abraham had to wait years to see the first sign of the fulfillment of God's covenant with him, that his seed should become a great people. Moses had to spend forty years in Midian desert-land before God called him to deliver his Israelite brethren. The young David, the anointed King of Israel, found he had much to do before the crown would be his to wear.

Our waiting is God's testing time. We must offer our vessel to God. And when the time is right, God will fill it.

The vessels we bring to be filled with God's oil of blessing are not at all like the ones in Second Kings 4. Those were of a definite capacity, and the little cup when it had been filled could hold no more. The vessels that we bring are elastic and widen out. The more you put into them, the more they can hold, so that there is no bound to the capacity of an honest and good heart for receiving the things of God.

#### The Vessels of Obedience.

"If ye know these things, happy are ye if ye do them." Wishes and anticipation are all right up to a point, but unless they are backed up and verified by conduct, even wishes and anticipation will not bring God's blessing. If we fill our vessels full with all manner of baser things before we take them to the true source of supply, there will be no room for the oil of God. We may contradict and stifle our desires by our conduct and by so doing make our expectations impossible to be fulfilled.

God has furnished a beautiful earth on which we can live. He has supplied us with plenty of resources for food, clothing, and shelter. He has given us a life in which to enjoy these things. In addition, He is willing and anxious to give us

*much more*, if we are only willing to accept it. He has in His storehouse of blessing treasure *eternal* and without limit. He has the power and the resource to give and give and keep on giving, even to all eternity. King David, who had experienced a measure of the Lord's goodness, expressed it this way: "Thou anointest my head with oil, my cup runneth over. Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life: and I will dwell in the house of the Lord for ever" (Ps. 23:5-6).

Desire, anticipation, and obedience. These are three vessels never to be separated if we would receive God's greatest gifts. Bring them to be filled over and over and over again, and you will never go away empty—never, never, *never!* ●●

## Kathy Kandor's Korner

### "Everybody Does It"

"THERE, that should do it!" exclaimed Karl, thrusting his hands deep into his pockets and finally turning them inside out to be certain there was nothing hidden in the corners.

It always amazes me just how many different trinkets (and worthwhile items) a boy's pockets can contain. This time, beside the usual collection, there was a goodly assortment of screws.

Returning the other articles to his pockets, Karl began sorting the screws.

"Quite a collection, Son," observed Neal as he passed through the room.

Screws! I thought. That explained why I had several screws in the bottom of the tub last week.

Neal tucked his comb in his back pocket and joined Karl at the kitchen shelf.

"A fine collection, Son. Where was the sale?"

"No sale. Picked them up at work," Karl answered indifferently as he scooped the sorted screws from the shelf into his tool chest.

Neal's brows shot up. "*At work*, Son?"

"Yes, Dad. In the department where we assemble



the relays, nobody likes to use the last few screws in a box, they'd rather open a new box. So pretty soon there are a whole lot of boxes on the shelf with just a few screws in each box. I decided I could help out by taking a few. They just get thrown into the scrap, anyway."

"But Son, those are not yours to take."

"Well, that's what everybody else does," defended Karl. "Why, it's stupid for us to be buying screws when I can have them for the taking."

Neal shook his head. "Everybody does *not* do it, Son. But even if they did, it wouldn't make it right."

"But I won't take advantage of the company that much, Dad. Some of the employees use company stationery, and envelopes, and even make long-distance calls on the company phone. Some take office supplies home with them. One boy who works in the mailing department even brags that he mails his letters and parcels free. What are a few screws, compared to *that*?"

Neal remained firm. "That doesn't excuse you, Son. To take and use what belongs to the company is stealing, in God's sight. Your chances of getting caught might be slight, as far as your company is concerned. But at the same time, there is no way you can keep from getting caught."

"What do you mean, Dad?" Karl closed his tool chest with a snap and straightened up to listen to his father.

"Just this, Son." Neal placed a fatherly hand on Karl's shoulder, as he asked, "You haven't forgotten that verse in Galatians 6, have you? 'Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap.' As Christians, we must be scrupulously honest. Some day we will have to give account to God."

Karl studied the toes of his shoes. He had never even thought that helping himself to a few screws—which wouldn't bring much money to the company anyway—could be called dishonesty. He had worked for the company for some time now and felt entitled to some of the "extras," as he called them.

"Even if we forget that we must give account to God, how much benefit are you getting from the screws, Karl? You save only a few dollars at the most. And what if your boss should come in and find you pocketing the company's screws? Not only might you lose your job, but you would have no reference to give to future employers. There is still another point, Son. You hope someday to have a business of your own. How would you feel to discover your employees helping themselves to the inventory?"

Karl crossed the floor and gazed out the window.

All was silent for a moment. Then turning to his father, he asked, "What do you think I should do?"

"By all means return the screws and ask God's forgiveness. The Bible assures us if we confess and forsake our sins, God will forgive. But we may have to bear the punishment now. God knows what is in the heart. He isn't like a kindly grandparent who smiles indulgently and says, 'Oh, that's all right—nobody's perfect!' If we sow weeds, we can't expect to get roses."

"Have you ever thought," I asked, "of the example you are setting before unbelievers?" A little dishonesty will do more than lower the non-believer's opinion of you as an individual. The cause of Christ will suffer as well. Remember, you are being constantly watched by those around you. You may be the only Bible they read."

Karl made no comment.

"Son, it is the little things that show what we really are, and that make up our character. There is no habit more dangerous than deceit, or taking what doesn't belong to us. Be it ever so small, the habit can grow. And the conscience that let us take a few *little* things may someday let us take things of much more value. Who knows where it will stop?"

Karl quickly moved to help me retrieve a cup that had fallen under the laundry table. I smiled a warm thanks, and he returned the smile.

"If we remember that verse in Proverbs 4: 14-15, we will keep ourselves out of temptation—even if 'everybody' does the wrong thing," I added.

The words of the text ran through my mind. "Enter not into the path of the wicked, . . . avoid it, pass not by it, turn from it, and pass away."

"And Son, you won't have to worry about future crops of weeds, if you don't sow them."

Karl swallowed hard, but smiled. "Thanks," he said, in spite of the lump in his throat. And quickly stooping down, he picked up his chest and snapped open the lid. Lifting out the top tray, he began gathering his collection of screws for the return trip. Tomorrow they would be back on the shelf—somehow. ●●

---

*We sow and reap just as we go:  
If we plant thorns, no flowers grow;  
If we sow seeds of truth and love,  
They'll fruitage bring from God above.*

*Then let us live with rightful aim,  
The evil shun, the good maintain;  
And with this motto ever clear,  
Improve each moment, hour, and year.*



# SCRIPTURAL SPOTLIGHT

*"Wherefore take unto you the whole armour of God,  
that ye may be able to withstand in the evil day, and  
having done all, to stand"*  
—Ephesians 6:13

THIS injunction of the great apostle Paul is to all who have in any way gained a victory over sin and who plan on more victories in the days to come. "Having done all, to stand"; that is, to withstand, to hold the ground you have won, to let no inch of soil gained from the evil pass again under the shadow of its black flag; but rather, where by God's help you have conquered, to *remain* conqueror. Having done all, hold your ground.

Was there ever a time when this injunction was needed more than now? This is our testing time. Is it not our most urgent duty to hold our ground, to keep the faith, to press for victory in this the closing hour of salvation's day?

The Scriptures, especially the writings of St. Paul, abound in military figures. This is not at all strange, for a great part of his life was passed in direct contact with soldiers. He lived under the greatest military power the world had ever seen, and Roman soldiers were in evidence in almost any part of the Empire where one might choose to go. More than one Roman soldier knew Paul personally. When the Jewish mob nearly tore him to pieces in the temple courts, Roman soldiers rescued him and took him prisoner. When he was sent as a prisoner to Felix on that night journey to Caesarea, in fear of his life, four hundred seventy Roman soldiers were his escort. Two long years he lay in Caesarea, a prisoner in the Roman garrison. In the city of Rome he lived chained to a Roman soldier, his companion day and night for more than two years.

It was only natural, then, that military figures should spring into the Apostle's mind as he wrote of the conflict of his Lord with the rulers of the darkness of this world, and of the personal contest of every loyalhearted Christian with the evil within and without. Our text is the Apostle's

exhortation to every Christian soldier: "and having done all, to stand." Nothing was worse in the mind of a soldier than defeat.

What is the first step in learning to stand? It is to estimate the power of the foe. History provides numerous examples of battles lost because an army underestimated the force of its enemy. Let us as Christian soldiers not underestimate the power of our foes. Let us further remember that our greatest, most subtle enemy lies encamped within our own cranium. We may have fought to a finish the temptations of old habits, ungodly ways and worldly associates. But the inner self, that evil heart from whence come evil thoughts, impurity, deceit, arrogance, malice, envy, jealousy, pride, and foolishness, is our greatest foe. These together form a host whose conquest will require the greatest generalship and a dogged determination. These are lurking foes that wage a constant guerilla warfare. Paul called it the "wiles of the devil"; it is the same serpent that beguiled Eve through his subtlety. And because of the subtlety of this deceitful heart, the battle demands every faculty of our being every hour of the day and every day of the year. "Having done all to stand." There can be no sitting down, no leave of absence, no furloughs, even after we think we have won a victory; we must constantly stand on guard with drawn sword in hand.

The apostle Paul offers some suggestions as to how we may stand. "Stand therefore, having your loins girt about with truth." Put on your belt first of all; and this is your belt, the truth of God. No man can stand in this conflict unless he be truth-girded. "A double minded man is unstable in all his ways," says the practical James. The Christian soldier must gird up the loins of his mind with the very truths of God. He must be able to say from the core of his heart, "I believe." No flowing, many-colored, softly folded

girdle of "believe-and-do-as-you-please," but a strong, mailed, buckled belt of divine truth which has been tested by every officer and worn by every private in these ranks. He must believe that God is, that His Word is supreme and must be obeyed in every detail. Without this girdle he would be lax and limp, fit only for skulking away, not for fighting nor yet for standing.

Let every one who would fight the Christian fight and win and share the Christian victory remember that first of all he must be girded with the Christian creed, the truth of the everlasting God, as proclaimed in His Word.

Then, put on your "breastplate of righteousness"; that is, make your life coincide with your creed. You cannot believe one thing and practice another. Live so that the arrows of evil cannot touch you because there are no crevices in your breastplate. A shining, consistent, blameless life is the breastplate with which you must confront the world. Show your faith by your works.

Then, do not forget the footwear. Proper footwear is essential for standing firm. You need it also for marching forward. Your feet must be "shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace"; with such shoes one may travel the narrow road with ease.

There can be no clash between "I ought" and "I will." The will must be submissive to obligation. Do not hesitate, says Paul; do not vacillate, but let your willingness for service, your willingness to see yourself, to be guided, to co-operate in every way, be like strong tough sandals protecting your feet from stones and thorns. Being shod with these sandals will bring that great peace which comes to those who love His law, and nothing shall offend them. If our peace of mind is disturbed, our sandals have been set aside, and we cannot make sure-footed progress.

Look well to your sandals of peace.

"And above all"—let us not fail to take this chief weapon of defence; it is the "shield of faith, wherewith ye shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked." The shield of the Roman soldier with which Paul was familiar protected every part of the body. Whatever weak point there might have been in other parts of the armor, the shield supplied these deficiencies, just as a strong, abiding faith comes to the rescue when all other graces are failing. Without the shield of faith, it is impossible to win.

But there is yet another piece. Let us not enter the conflict with undefended head. The head is an exposed part and very vital. So put on "for an helmet the hope of salvation." Hope is an absolute necessity. Do not expect to be defeated; ex-

pect to overcome. Anticipate victory. Build on your hope of salvation. One who enters the fight believing he will be defeated is defeated already. Therefore let your headpiece be the most conspicuous part of your armor, your confidence ever shining and towering amid the conflict.

Being thus equipped, we shall yet not be able to stand unless we grasp our offensive weapon, "the Sword of the spirit, which is the word of God." Mark how our great Example used this weapon. Every evil suggestion was met with a quick, sharp, "It is written," thrust from this mighty Sword, and the enemy was vanquished. This sword will do no less for us, if we become skillful in its use by daily practice.

Keep your sword sharp; you cannot fight without it.

And now just one thing further: Being clad in the armor and furnished with the weapons, you will yet hold your ground against evil only by watchfulness and prayer. "Praying always and watching thereunto with thanksgiving" is the closing admonition of the great Apostle. To be alert and watching for the enemy is as much the soldier's duty as fighting and marching. And prayer is the food which strengthens him for the march and sustains him in the battle; it is the nourishment that enables him to become "strong in the Lord and in the power of his might." The well of divine power is deep, and without prayer we would have no way to draw from it and put its power to human use. Oh, let us watch and pray.

And now let us see what this armor did for the great general who wrote of its value. Fully equipped and fully armed, with burning zeal and the voice of his risen Lord ringing in his ears, Paul started on the course of his great adventure. And now that valiant voice out of the darkness rings triumphantly across the centuries: "I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith" (II Tim. 4:7-8).

Armed as he was, and fighting as he fought, we may yet subdue our lower nature into the dust from whence it came; we may yet pass from conquering to conqueror, and "having done all, to stand." ●●

---

True service is what God wants from us. Any other service is not acceptable.

True service is never marked by disloyalty, or insincerity. If it smells in the least of sham, imitation, hypocrisy, it has lost its freshness and is untrue.

## Over the Fence

I have found a real friend in my neighborhood. Hers is the only house I enter and find an open Bible and someone ready to point out an interesting article with meaning for us in these last days. Many are the people to whom she witnesses; no doubt to many of them she is the only Bible they know. I offer to answer sometimes, as it helps us both and we share the joy of receiving.

On these warm, summer days, it is pleasant to pop out into the backyard and have a few words together at the gate. We do see each other most evenings, if only for an hour, and very often someone has been to her home and she has made an all-out effort to speak out on the Lord's side.

I find great comfort from the knowledge which she imparts and feel more able to shine for the Lord just where He has placed me.

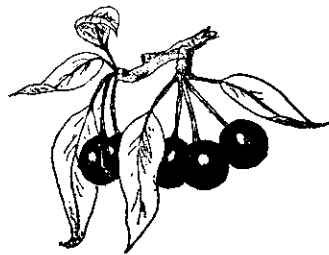
We do not ask that life should always be a pleasant road, nor that He should take from us

ought of its load, nor that flowers should always spring beneath our feet, knowing too well the poison and the sting of things too sweet. Rather, we ask that He will guide us daily and keep us underneath His everlasting wings. When He cometh to make up His jewels, His loved and His own, may we be worthy; may we strive day by day, keeping self out of sight and giving Him all the adoration and worship we can now, give Him thanks for the light which is shining more and more to the perfect day.

"From trials unexempted Thy dearest children are," so may we find strength to overcome all of them and never cease striving to reach that goal. What a glorious time it will be when the earth shall be full of the glory of God as the waters cover the sea!

Actually we suffer little in comparison to what the worthies of old did, and sometimes being alone is for our good, as we can meditate on serious subjects, and avoid the gossip and scandal which crop up in crowds. ●● —Contributed

## Fruitful Fragments



Do you know the story of the two bears—Bear and Forbear?

*The best angle to use when approaching a problem is the "try" angle.*

No one plans to fail; they just fail to plan.

*Not everything we face can be changed, but nothing can be changed until we face it.*

Look back only to find something to help you push ahead.

*Every failure can teach us something if we will learn.*

There are two kinds of people: those who are part of the problem, and those who are part of the solution. Which are you?

*Shallow waters are easily muddied. So is shallow faith easily disturbed. Get deeper, so the winds of doubt around you cannot disturb the tranquillity and the peace of God that reigns in the calm depths of your soul.*

It is permissible to find excuses for others, but never for yourself.

*Whatever the hand finds to do must be done with the heart in it.*

One test of good manners is being able to put up with bad ones.

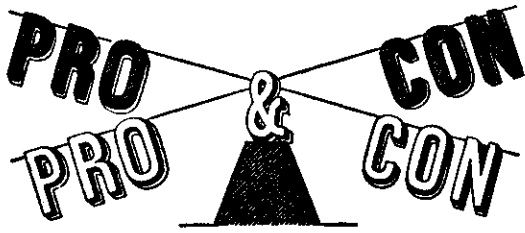
*When looking for faults, look in the mirror—not out the window.*

If our only tool is a hammer, we tend to see every problem as a nail.

*The Lord sometimes takes us into troubled waters, but never to drown us; only to cleanse us.*

The greatest friend of Truth is time.  
The greatest enemy of Truth is prejudice.  
The constant companion of Truth is humility.





### *A Column for Open Discussion*

*All our readers do not agree with us. If you are among those who differ on some point, write us your views and we will consider them in the light of Scripture teaching. Our policy is the Apostle's injunction: "Prove all things; hold fast that which is good."*

#### • On the Origin of the Devil

**"If you will believe the Bible, it very plainly tells us the origin and nature of the devil. Read Revelation 12:7-9:**

**"And there was war in heaven: Michael and his angels fought against the dragon; and the dragon fought and his angels, and prevailed not; neither was their place found any more in heaven. And the great dragon was cast out, that old serpent, called the Devil, and Satan, which deceiveth the whole world: he was cast out into the earth, and his angels were cast out with him.' Jesus referred to this event when He told His disciples in Luke 10:18, 'I beheld Satan as lightning fall from heaven.'**

**"The Bible teaches that one third of the angels in heaven rebelled with Satan and were cast out of heaven. They are referred to as evil spirits or demons or devils, but Satan is the prince of devils and they work tirelessly to overthrow God and man."**

**—E. A. P., British Columbia**

When we look in Revelation for an explanation of how the devil arrived upon earth, we are looking in the wrong place, because Revelation 1:1 states that the message was sent from Jesus "to show unto his servants things which must shortly come to pass"—future events, not past. It is impossible that Revelation 12 could describe the casting out of the literal devil when believers in the literal devil think he was already on the earth at the beginning, tempting Eve in the garden of Eden—this was several thousand years before Revelation was written!

August, 1978

If we get from Revelation 12 any idea of a literal monster or devil that has a tail long enough to have drawn "the third part of the stars of heaven" and "cast them to the earth," we surely should at sometime during our lives see some part of that tail—where on earth could such a huge monster hide?

And how can we imagine war in heaven, where all are "equal unto the angels, neither can they die any more"? Does the God of holiness, who cannot tolerate any evil, have beings in His presence who are evil-minded? (see Hab. 1:13).

And how could "the stars of heaven" literally be "cast . . . to the earth"? Surely there is no sense or reason to such thinking. Our little planet is only a dot in an immensity of space and stars too numerous to count.

No, Revelation 12 is highly symbolic; the great red dragon is a symbol of the powers of evil that will threaten to devour the newly born "man child," Christ and His saints newly established in their places of authority. The result will be conflict, even the Battle of Armageddon; it is all prophecy, far removed from any devil folklore common in Christendom. The fall of this "great red dragon" from any place of power will indeed be the falling "from heaven" which Jesus said, speaking prophetically, that He saw (Luke 10:18). He and His saints will be victorious over all powers of evil; all will fall "as lightning" before His superior divine power.

**"Without the Bible, the question of the origin of evil would remain unexplained. We have been led to believe the origin of evil began in the garden of Eden, but this is not true. It began in heaven with the angel Lucifer. God has been pleased to reveal this truth to us so that we may be aware of the mighty foe we have to fight. It would be a hopeless case for man if Jesus had not come in the flesh and conquered the devil fair and square. So by faith in the Lord Jesus we can by faith in Christ's power be victors over sin, the flesh and the devil."**

It seems strange there is such a strong link established between Lucifer and the devil, when Isaiah 14 makes no such suggestion. An unbiased reading of chapters 13 and 14 of Isaiah will show that the Prophet is referring to the King of Babylon who fell from the political heavens. Verse 4 reads, "That thou take up this proverb against the king of Babylon, and say, How hath the oppressor ceased! the golden city ceased." In no way can Isaiah 14 be used to prove the existence of a personal devil that originated by being cast out

of heaven. The prophet Isaiah used Lucifer as a symbolic name for an earthly ruler, the king of Babylon specifically, not a fallen angel. Misinterpreting the Bible in this fashion reminds me of a story I heard recently. One man said to another, "The Bible is a book about baseball." "What makes you say that?" asked the second man. The first replied, "The first verse of the Bible reads, In the big inning" (beginning).

I suppose that you refer to Hebrews 2:14, when you say "Jesus came in the flesh and conquered the devil fair and square." The verse reads, speaking of Jesus' mortal state, "that through death he might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil." Have we any reason for attaching to these words an idea of a "personal," literal devil or superpower of evil? Does the verse not define "the devil" by saying that the devil is "him that had the power of death"? And what is it that has the power of death? It is nothing less than sin, for "sin when it is finished bringeth forth death" (Jas. 1:15); and "The sting of death is sin" (I Cor. 15:56). The writer of Hebrews is saying that Jesus was made mortal like His brethren, thus He was tempted in all points as they are—"yet without sin" (Heb. 4:15). In this way by becoming dead to sin (Rom. 6:11), He destroyed "him that had the power of death," that is, sin, evil, the devil, and showed us how we may do the same. This is always God's method of dealing with the devil, with sin; why complicate it by attaching a mythological label to the word that only creates confusion and contradiction and savors more of superstition than of divine teaching?

**"Ezekiel 28:15-18 tells us how evil all began. Please believe the Scriptures. They say of Satan, 'Thou wast perfect in thy ways from the day that thou wast created, till iniquity was found in thee. Thine heart was lifted up because of thy beauty, thou hast corrupted thy wisdom by reason of thy brightness.'"**

Our correspondent uses the words, "says of Satan," as though Ezekiel the prophet said he was describing Satan. This is man's interpretation, not the Bible's. The term Satan nowhere appears in the entire book of Ezekiel.

If we start reading at the 23rd chapter of Ezekiel, we find the Lord is telling Ezekiel of the iniquities of Samaria and Jerusalem, which he represents by two daughters, Ahola and Aholihah. Then he describes the judgments that are destined to come upon them for their iniquity. Then in chapter 25, he relates the judgments forecast for

the Ammonites, who were the inveterate enemies of Israel and were a source of spiritual corruption. In chapter 26, the Lord came to Ezekiel again and predicted the judgment which would befall Tyrus; and continuing in chapter 27, he tells of the irrecoverable fall of Tyrus. The 28th chapter relates the doom of the prince of Tyrus, who had become proud and haughty and tried to usurp the authority of God. There is absolutely no proof that chapter 28 is a discussion of Satan or the devil. Verse 2 says clearly, "Son of man, say unto the prince of Tyrus, Thus saith the Lord. . . ."

**"The Scripture in Ezekiel 28 harmonizes with the words of Jesus recorded in John 8:44, 'Ye are of your father the devil, and the lusts of your father ye will do. He was a murderer from the beginning and abode not in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaketh a lie he speaketh of his own: for he is a liar, and the father of it.'**

**"Will you accept the words of Jesus? or will Jesus have to say to you as He did to the Pharisees, 'Because I tell you the truth, ye believe me not?'"**

In previous verses Jesus had confirmed that the Jews were natural children of Abraham. We know that Abraham was not a personal devil.

James informs us that Abraham was called the Friend of God. It is obvious that Jesus was referring to their evil dispositions and those of their ancestors, not some superhuman monster or power of evil. He could not have meant that they were literally descended from devils, or Abraham would also have had to be a devil. In opposing Jesus they were demonstrating the same rebellious nature that their fathers did in the time of Moses.

We can certainly accept the words of Jesus, and Jesus had no idea of the existence of a personal devil.

*(To Be Continued Next Issue)*

---

**"Some people who have the greatest number of faults are themselves the most merciless in their criticism of others. From the tops of their heads to the soles of their feet they are full of jealousies. They spend their lives looking for muskrats and mud turtles instead of mountain goats and soaring eagles. Such individuals are always sure, then, to find something lowly rather than something lofty."**

*—Selected*

## Our Readers Write...

### The Day Is Near

Having the water of life in great measure makes for happiness. If we take only sparingly of this water of life, only just enough to keep us alive, we will wither away, and be unable to bear the lovely fruits of the Spirit.

We must work with greater diligence and take heed lest we fall and miss out on the great reward. We can see the coming of the Lord drawing nearer and nearer; we must press steadfastly on. Unless the end of each day reveals progress on our journey to the Kingdom, there is little prospect for us, as there is no standing still; we either advance, or we go backward.

The great Day of the Lord is drawing near, and will soon be a reality. If we are always on our watchtower, we will not be caught unawares. "What I say unto you, I say unto all, Watch." This is very applicable for our day.

*Westcross, South Wales*

G. S.

### Meditate More

We need to read, and meditate continuously to preserve our spiritual freshness. A second off guard can move us off the track, which then takes extra work to regain. We can read and read, but we have to study and absorb what we read and then put into action these things to reach our goal.

We in the world have to meditate silently as there is no one to share our hope with. They are just not interested in anything that takes work to gain; they think only about the little daily trivialities.

We can count our blessings that we have letters and literature, tapes and telephones, to keep us in touch with those who do share the same interests.

We need lots of faith and prayer and we can always sing, even silently, which helps to lift our spirits.

Let us not consider anything too hard to give up for the glory just ahead.

*Peru, Iowa*

F. B.

### What We Should Read

We should be very discreet and careful of what we read, because there is so much literature on most every subject, and most of it would be a waste of time.

But when we adopt the Word of God as our basic "first," the others will fall into their proper place, and much will find no place at all. We can benefit from reading which contributes to our physical or spiritual well-being, but we must bar all that is novelistic or worldly—such has no part in the doings of a Christian. We speak a different language.

We can also benefit from some reading in many areas of our planet and of nature—such as oceanography, animal and bird life, the list goes on and on—but we must always bear in mind that all of these things did not just happen; they have a Designer, and an incessant Watchman.

We must keep a steady course toward the Kingdom, putting first things first, holding fast to this lively hope.

*Thermopolis, Wyoming*

J. A.

### Earnestly Contending

We must earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints (Jude 3). Before the crown of righteousness can be ours, there is a race to be run (Heb. 12:1), and this race must be run with patience. After this race is run, there may be a waiting period, as Job wrote, "If I wait, the grave is mine house" (Job 17:13), but as this darkness could not hold Christ (I Thess. 1:10), so it will not be able to hold any of the "dead in Christ" (I Thess. 4:16). Our Lord Jesus has given us positive assurance that they shall rise (John 5:28-29).

It will indeed be a joyful experience to have our worthless bodies changed to immortal bodies, and fashioned like unto his glorious body (Phil. 3:21).

Jesus tells us to "search the scriptures" for information as to what God requires of us if we would receive eternal life (John 5:39). God has given us these sacred writings, proclaimed by the prophets, Jesus and the apostles; and if we study them earnestly and carefully, we will obtain that good understanding which will be a "wellspring of life" in us (Prov. 16:22).

*Bright, Ontario, Canada*

A. B.

### Not Too Easy

It is so easy to "take things easy," and the first thing we know, something that we intended to do has been neglected.

Climbing the peaks may not be easy, but when we have reached the top, the satisfaction will be well worth the effort.

I try to keep in mind that I should try to improve myself every day. If we don't move forward, we will go backward.

*Adamsville, Tennessee*

I. P.

### Deceased

We have just received word of the death of Mrs. Judy Patterson of Charlottesville, Virginia, on June 30, 1978. Sister Patterson was a subscriber to the *Message* for nearly fifty-three years, and corresponded actively as long as her strength permitted. Her home was a testimony to her faith, a welcome refreshment to members of the Church who came her way; her kindness and hospitality were above reproach.

## Twelve Booklets

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

ALL for \$3.00, Postpaid.



# *The Potter*

*The Potter takes His molding clay,  
And with His love's rich skill,  
He twists and shapes and brings to light  
The object of His will.  
The finished work doth not appear  
At once; nor do we see  
The plan He has, the finished form  
This work of His shall be.  
At times the clay beneath His touch  
Unwilling is to yield;  
But He works on, rebuilds, reshapes,  
Till goodness is revealed.  
This Potter molds with patient love;  
Perfection is His thought,  
As from the ugly, barren mass  
A masterpiece is wrought.*



*The task is long; the work is great;  
But on He works with joy,  
For in His mind He sees the whole  
Which nothing must destroy.  
God is the Master Potter, yea,  
My life, the clay He molds;  
My twisted, shapeless, yielded will  
Within His hands He holds.  
I cannot see the finished work,  
But 'neath His shaping hand  
I place myself--My life shall be  
The masterpiece He planned!*

--Selected