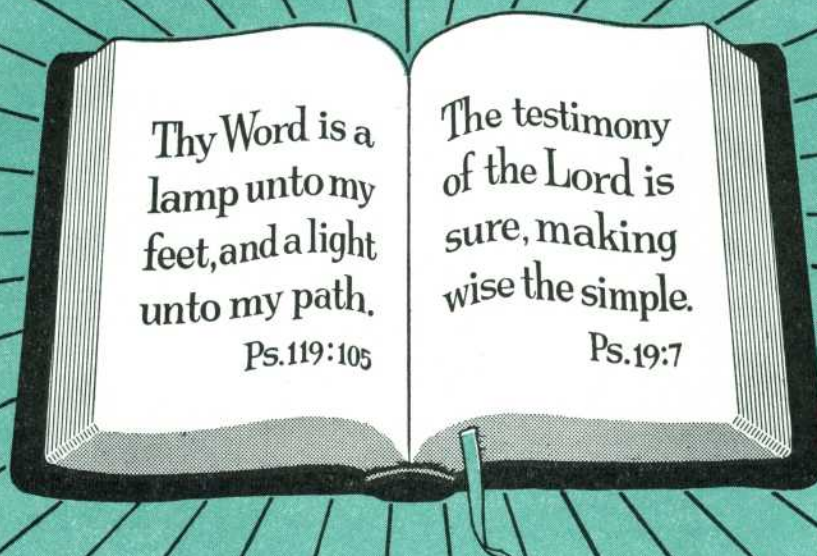


Megiddo Message

DEVOTED TO THE CAUSE OF CHRIST



Christian Exorcism? NO!

**Demons Do NOT Exist
Learning the Hard Way
Israel**

Megiddo Message

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

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Editorially Speaking...

Can You Admit It?

MAKING a mistake is one thing; admitting it is another.

We all make mistakes. "To err is human." Mistakes are part of mortal life. It has been said that he who never makes a mistake is in the grave.

Fortunately for us, most of our mistakes have little consequence and involve no more than a slight alteration in our plans, or a moment's inconvenience, or a second attempt. However, if we are trying to make every experience of our lives count toward spiritual growth, we will see in every small mistake an opportunity to check our spiritual stature. How big are we—big enough to admit that we made the mistake?

Some of the best lessons we ever learn come from our mistakes and failures. The error of the past often becomes the wisdom and success of the future. We did it; and if only we can admit it, we can grow thereby.

A careful person is not so likely to make a mistake as the careless; the slow, cautious type will avoid many of the blunders made by the swift. It does not pay, however, to be so slow and cautious as to be in the "never-do-anything" class just to avoid the humiliation of making a mistake. Sometimes a mistake is plain evidence that we at least *tried* to do something.

Mistakes in our spiritual lives are more serious by nature, for they affect our eternal welfare. Each mistake lowers us in the esteem of God Almighty; and failing to admit our mistake takes us still further down. In the words of Israel's ancient Prophet, we "add sin to sin" when we refuse to admit our error (Isa. 30:1). For example, we say what would have been better left unsaid. It is a mistake; we realize it immediately. But it is too late. And when someone points out our lack of good judgment, we defend ourselves—and double our wrong—instead of openly admitting that we did it and apologizing for the harm our blunder caused.

If we try to cover our mistakes, we practice deception—an art which the human creation has been perfecting from time immemorial. The prophet Jeremiah wrote of it: "The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked" (Jer. 17:9).

Of course, simply admitting a mistake is not enough. No employer wants a man who keeps making the same mistake over and over, however freely he admits it; neither does God want those who keep making the same mistakes. Honest recognition of our mistakes is the first step. But before we can be right in God's sight, we must *forsake* them (Prov. 28:13; Isa. 55:7).

Admitting our mistakes may be painful; forsaking them may require much diligence. But when the Master finally pronounces our work "Well done," we shall thank God that we were humble enough to admit our mistakes and to forsake every evil way! ●●

CHRISTIAN Exorcism? NO!

BUT A thousand voices today are shouting "Yes!"

It's "yes" to exorcism—and demonism, and Satanism, occultism, spiritism, and a hundred other arts and isms that are gripping the imagination of men and women today. Those who believe in God and those who deny Him—both are finding fascination in the supposed realm of the devil.

What does it all mean?

The prophecy of the apostle Paul for the last days rings a clear tone of divine foreknowledge: "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" (I Tim. 4:1), or "turning to spirits that lead astray and teachings of demons" (Interlinear Translation).

Today's world is fast proving the unerring accuracy of the prophecy. Never has the occult world received so much attention from the "civilized" world. Never have so many church members of all denominations been so ready to accept what they believe to be the reality of exorcism, non-church members the meanwhile finding spirits as easy explanation for a troubled and tottering society.

A recent survey by the Center for Policy Research points up the marked increase in the popularity of the supernatural. Those positively certain of the existence of the devil totaled 48 per cent of the population surveyed, compared with 37 per cent nine years ago; another 20 per cent now consider the devil's existence "probable." And these figures were gathered prior to the excitement caused by the demonology film, "The Exorcist."

Why the sharp increase? Some experts identify it with a mood of "uncertainty and stress, when things seem to be falling apart and resources seem limited for coping with it." People trying to make sense of the world in such a dilemma tend to "look for scapegoats" such as the devil. As many see it, current events seem without reason or good purpose, and the balance of good versus evil has "tipped in the direction of evil" (they assume that the world is a battleground between the forces of God and the forces of Satan).

Church leaders and thinking laymen everywhere are deeply concerned about the modern obsession. However, their concern does not arise from their *disbelief* in the supernatural evil; rather, they fear because of what they believe to be the *reality* of it. "The devil is real," says a popular present-day evangelist. And so are demons—they are "a highly organized system of evil spirits hostile to God and men." Says another religious writer, "Scriptural evidence... for the existence of Satan and his legions is simply too powerful to be ignored."

The real danger in the prevailing interest in Satanism and the occult, they feel, is the increased influence Satan is gaining by distracting people away from God. They believe that those who read books about the occult and demonism, or adopt their practices are literally selling their souls to the devil. And once the devil makes the purchase, he doesn't let go easily.

A majority of denominational Protestant churches, as well as the Roman Catholic, are at present upholding the belief in exorcism and "supernatural evil." An article by John Warwick Montgomery, "Exorcism: Is It For Real?" appearing in the July 26, 1974 issue of *Christianity Today*, gives the basis for this belief. They find what they consider satisfactory evidence for their position both inside and outside the Bible. "There is no doubt whatever," the author says, "that Jesus believed in exorcism and practiced it." And he cites Jesus' casting out a devil (Luke 11). He supports the movie "The Exorcist," and considers that it has been "unjustly maligned." Exorcism, he admits, may be misused and wrongly conducted, but it is nonetheless a rightful ceremony. Christian exorcism must be done in the name of Christ by one "possessing a genuine belief-relationship with Christ in whose name one speaks, and beyond that, a sanctified life," according to the article. Protestant churches give credence to a variety of exorcist methods. "It is not necessary that human traditions, rites or ceremonies instituted by men should everywhere be the same," but the practice should not be discarded simply because it is sometimes misused. For "the great exorcistic rites of

the historic church" (the Roman Catholic) are "at their best nothing more than consistent elaborations of the New Testament teaching that demons can be cast out in the 'name that is above every name.' "

In a "Timely Topic" published in the July, 1974 issue of the *Megiddo Message*, under the caption, "What About the Occult?" we discussed Scriptural evidence and reasoning as to why we disbelieve in the existence of devils and demons, and the art of demon-expulsion called exorcism. In recent weeks we have received some questions and objections, because the article did not attempt to answer all angles of the subject. One of our readers sent this reply:

"I am dismayed that you are leading people to doubt the existence of a literal devil. I would like to point out some of the gross errors in your theories.

"The first thing you mention is that God did not create evil or evil beings. This is true and is impossible to dispute; however, God does not create robots. His creatures have free wills. They can submit to God or go their own way. A reading of Ezekiel 28:12-16 will show that Satan was created good but became evil of his own will (the same way man became evil). Isaiah writes in 14:12-14 that Satan's sin was pride. Lucifer (Satan) rebelled against God by trying to be greater than He.

"In another section you pick one isolated verse in James' Epistle to state that evil comes from within man, from his own lusts. Now understand that I am not disputing James or the One who inspired his writings, but would you explain who '... the prince of the power of the air' who '... worketh in the children of disobedience' is (Eph. 2:2)? If there is as you say 'no room for the traditional devil to tempt us,' what does Paul mean by this: 'For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places (heavenly spheres, Berkeley Version)'? (Eph. 6:12).

"If devils, demons in more contemporary translations, are only personifications of evil or symbols of the lust within man, are we to believe that Jesus drove the lust of the two men of Gadara into a herd of swine?

"You state on the first page that your magazine is published to disseminate Bible truth. Why don't you do so?"

Our friend presents several questions, which will be answered in subsequent articles.

But let us consider briefly a few points: We agree that we mortals are free moral agents, not created robots. Neither are the angels robots. But they are not free moral agents in the sense that we are. They are glorified beings, possessing immortal life (Luke 20:35-36). If they are able to sin and choose to do evil and rebel against the God who glorified them, how could God—who knows the end from the beginning (Isa. 46:9-10)—have made such a mistake as to give to them an *eternal* reward? And if angels could sin, what assurance would we have that should we succeed in reaching that exalted state, a like fate might not be ours? Must we believe that angels who inhabit God's eternal heavens are still subject to sin and all the weakness to which human flesh is heir? The apostle John says, "Whosoever is born of God doth not commit sin . . . and he cannot sin, because he is born of God" (1 John 3:9)—are not the angels "born of God"?

If angels can rebel against God's authority, then God is not omnipotent and all-wise. For the promise is, "He maketh wars to cease unto the end of the earth" (Ps. 46:9)—evidently this is not true in the heavens where God dwells, if angels may become "devils" and "fall."

And what about Lucifer? What right have we to classify him as a "fallen angel" when the narrative in Isaiah says plainly that he is a "man" and not God, even identifying him specifically as "the king of Babylon"? (see Isa. 14:4, 12, 16).

And let us ask again: If "one isolated verse" in the Epistle of James is not correct, what Bible teaching may we depend on? James says also that "the spirit that dwelleth in us lusteth to envy" (Jas. 4:5). God recognized this fact ages ago, when He "saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth" (Gen. 6:5). But what did He say was the *source* of this evil? Was it the spirit of the devil or the demons that were infesting men? No, the inspired writer says that it was the result of man's own evil desires—"that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually" (Gen. 6:5). Where, then, is the role of the devil, if man's own imaginations are evil by nature? Are not the words of James confirmed, that "every man is tempted when he is drawn away of his own lust, and enticed"?

And what is "the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience"? (Eph. 2:2). The Apostle explains his own terms: "Wherein in time past ye walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air"—to walk ac-

according to "the course of this world" and according to "the prince of the power of the air" are two ways of saying the same thing. The world of Paul's day was exceedingly superstitious, and Paul was using language easily understood by his readers in that day. He continues in the next verse to explain that to walk "according to the prince of the power of the air" is to have "our conversation . . . in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of of the flesh and of the mind" (Eph. 2:3). Paul knew, because he himself had formerly been subject to this pervading power. That is why he recognized the Christian's need for spiritual armor (Eph. 6:11-17) in this spiritual combat.

He wrote, "For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places." Paul was emphasizing the spiritual nature of this warfare, and the fact that it differs from that of the military soldier—there is no flesh and blood involved. But we have no reason to believe that Paul believed in evil spirits and demons. "Principalities" would suggest the authority [civil] under which he lived, the "powers that be" (Rom. 13:1-2); these would also be "the rulers of the darkness of this world," and we can be sure that there was much "spiritual wickedness" in those "high places." The Roman Empire offered formidable resistance to the Christian movement, and often proved a really opposing "devil." But Paul did not think of the world as infested with demons and evil spirits.

No, if literal devils and demons and supernatural spirits of evil are responsible for man's misdeeds, then the whole tenor of the Bible is wrong, for all through the Book man is accountable for his own conduct—a grave injustice if man may be possessed by evil powers beyond his control.

Let us ask another question: If Jesus believed in the existence of literal demons, and if the demons He "cast out" were actually spirits of evil and demons from another world, in what part of a man might these demons dwell? How could they exist, except in a man's mind? And how could they take up residence there and be other than what we today would call mental illness? And why are we told in the gospel account that the man who had had the demon cast out stood "clothed, and in his right mind"?

No, we stand firmly behind the author of the book of James, and all the Bible writers, who combine to tell us not of literal devils and demons but of evil men and women led astray by their own evil desires and imaginings. ●●

NEXT ISSUE: WHO IS THE DEVIL?

Demons Do NOT Exist

Because . . .

If demons exist, then God is not the only super-being to be feared. We are commanded, "Only fear the Lord, and serve him in truth with all your heart" (I Sam. 12:24). Fearing the Lord "with all your heart" leaves no place for fearing devils. Hundreds of times we are commanded to fear the Lord; not once are we told to fear a super-power of evil. We are told, "Sanctify the Lord of hosts himself; and let him be your fear, and let him be your dread" (Isa. 8:13).

If demons exist, then God shares His supreme authority with another, and we read, "O Lord of hosts, God of Israel, . . . thou art the God, even thou alone" (Isa. 37:16) And again, "Thou art great, and doest wondrous things: thou art God alone" (Ps. 86:10). And again, the Lord speaks through the voice of His prophet: "I am the Lord, and there is none else, there is no God beside me: . . . for I am God, and there is none else; I am God, and there is none like me . . . I am the Lord: . . . and my glory will I not give unto another" (Isa. 45:5; 46:9; 42:8). If demons exist which can challenge and override His authority, He cannot rightly be called "God alone."

If demons exist, then we are confronting a power above and beyond our power to control; and God's promise has failed, that "There hath no temptation taken you but such as is common to man: but God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able [to bear]" (I Cor. 10:13). God would be untrue if demons could possess us and overpower us.

If demons exist, then all power does not belong to God and originate in Him, as Paul says that it does: "For there is no power but of God" (Rom. 13:1). If demons exist and have power, that power surely is not of God. And the Psalmist wrote plainly, "God has spoken once, and I have heard these two things, that power is of God; and mercy is thine, O Lord" (Ps. 62:11, Septuagint).

If demons exist and are performing wonders in the world, then the statement of the Psalmist is in-

correct, that the Lord is a God "who alone doeth great wonders" (Ps. 136:4).

If demons exist and are responsible for motivating the evil in the world, then Joseph's brothers should have been possessed with demons or been acting as ministers of Satan when they conspired together to sell Joseph into slavery in Egypt. The Bible, however, records no such demon-possession. Rather, it tells us that "God meant it unto good" to allow Joseph to be sold into slavery in Egypt, for it was according to His purpose to "save much people alive" (Gen. 50:20).

If demons exist, they should have been Paul's subject when he wrote about the struggle that raged within him. He said, "I find then a law, that, when I would do good, evil is present with me [note that he does not say he is possessed with the devil]. For I delight in the law of God after the inward man: but I see another law in my members [a law, not a demon], warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin which is in my members" (Rom. 7:21-23).

If demons exist, Paul should have feared the possibility of being overcome by them and in need of exorcising, instead of his firm persuasion that "neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God" (Rom. 8:38-39).

If demons exist, then we are not tempted by our own ungoverned desires, as the author of the book of James contended: "Every man is tempted, when he is drawn away of his own lust [not a supernatural devil or demon], and enticed. Then when lust hath conceived, it bringeth forth sin: and sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth death" (Jas. 1:14-15).

If demons exist and are responsible for evil, then the Israelites who failed to enter the Land of Promise must have been overcome by them. However, the Record reads that they "entered not in because of unbelief" (Heb. 3:19; 4:6). And the author of the Epistle to the Hebrews warns us to fear—demons? No, "Let us therefore fear, lest, a promise being left us of entering into his rest, any of you should seem to come short of it" (Heb. 4:1). The danger lies not in spirits or demons, but in our own failure and inattention.

If demons exist and cause men to go astray into evil, then Jesus was mistaken when He said that the HUMAN HEART is the source of all evil. "For from within, out of the heart of men, proceed . . ." and He enumerates the various evils that plague mankind (Mark 7:20-23).

If demons exist and are responsible for evil, then Israel's ancient prophets erred in urging the people to forsake their evil ways and seek God—if they were possessed with demons, they would have first needed exorcising. However, we read of no such need. The message of the prophets is simple: "Cast away from you all your transgressions, whereby ye have transgressed; and make you a new heart and a new spirit: for why will ye die, O house of Israel?" (Ezek. 18:31). Their conduct was sufficiently grievous as to merit "death," yet there is no mention of evil spirits seducing them.

The sin of Israel was not that they had given themselves over to powers of devils and demons but that "thou hast forsaken the Lord thy God, and that my fear is not in thee, saith the Lord God of hosts" (Jer. 2:19). The Lord's prophet Isaiah saw also the cause of Israel's tragedy—not a nation overcome by a superpower of evil, but a "sinful nation, a people laden with iniquity, a seed of evildoers, children that are corrupters: they have forsaken the Lord, they have provoked the Holy One of Israel to anger, they are gone away backward" (Isa. 1:4).

If demons exist and increase with an increase of evil in the world, Paul should have noted this in his prophecies for the last days. But he saw only an increase in the evil men and false seducers: "Evil men and seducers shall wax worse and worse, deceiving, and being deceived" (II Tim. 3:13).

If demons exist, the Lord should have noted them as the cause of evil from the very beginning of His work on this planet. Rather, we read that "every imagination of the thoughts of his [man's] heart was only evil continually" (Gen. 6:5). It was the imagination of the thoughts of his heart that produced the evil, not a supernatural power.

If God dealt in exorcism Himself, He was unjust in commanding Israel, "There shall not be found among you any one that . . . useth divination, or an observer of times, or an enchanter, or a witch, or a charmer, or a consulter with familiar spirits, or a wizard, or a necromancer. For all that do these things are an abomination unto the Lord" (Deut. 18:10-12). ●●

TIMELY TOPICS

THE freedom to which we in America have become accustomed is enjoyed by few other citizens of the world. Very few of us appreciate this freedom as we should. We ought to cherish it, nourish it and protect it. And we should never violate it.

In using the words freedom and liberty, just what do we mean? Both words have several definitions, covering a wide range of ideas—from the slave who has been freed from serfdom, or the country or city freed from foreign domination, to the libertine who violates the rules of society.

Our Secular Freedom The English language has no word to describe conduct within the bounds of Christian ethics or the rules laid down by the Creator of the human race, or another word to describe behavior outside those limits. Nor can men define fully the words within the language. The courts of the United States have been struggling for years with the word “obscenity,” and have not yet been able to define it to everyone’s satisfaction.

The Bible offers a guideline to human conduct, but the majority of people today reject its precepts.

No human being who would continue to do just as he pleased would live very long or be of any use to society. The uncontrolled use of alcoholic beverages leads only to poverty and premature death. The glutton who cannot control his appetite is a slave to his own desires. The line between freedom to do as we please and freedom to do as we should is very narrow. Nevertheless, it does exist; and in the future, when God’s kingdom is in operation on this earth, the inhabitant shall hear a word behind him saying, “This is the way, walk ye in it.”

There are many things in our society and government which we would like to change. Many of these things we feel sure we could improve. The Christian would like to see less money spent for military establishment and more for human needs. We would like to see less money spent on graft and corruption. Our taxes increase, and we have no way of duplicating Jesus’ miracle when He sent Simon Peter to take the tribute money from the fish’s mouth. Nevertheless, our government—with

all its deficiencies—is one of the best in the world. All governments serve a useful purpose and should be respected and obeyed by all citizens, especially Christians. We are not “free” to break the law. Without a code of laws and officials to enforce those laws, our civilization as we know it could not exist. If everyone could do just as he pleased, we would have a state of anarchy.

The Christian’s first allegiance, of course, is to God. But until such time as Christ and the saints assume control, the Christian has a duty to the secular authority. He must obey the laws of the country of which he is a citizen, and from which he receives protection. Under no circumstances must those laws be flaunted, or ignored, or demonstrated against. The apostle Paul is very specific:

“Let every soul be subject unto the higher powers. For there is no power but of God: the powers that be are ordained of God. Whosoever therefore resisteth the power, resisteth the ordinance of God: and they that resist shall receive to themselves damnation.

“For rulers are not a terror to good works, but to the evil. Wilt thou then not be afraid of the power? do that which is good, and thou shalt have praise of the same: for he is the minister of God to thee for good. But if thou do that which is evil, be afraid; for he beareth not the sword in vain; for he is the minister of God, a revenger to execute wrath, . . . but also for conscience sake. For, for this cause pay ye tribute also: for they are God’s ministers, attending continually upon this very thing.

“Render therefore to all their dues: tribute to whom tribute is due; custom to whom custom; fear to whom fear; honor to whom honor” (Rom. 13).

Again Paul’s advice to Titus was: “Put them in mind to be subject to principalities and powers, to obey magistrates” (3:1).

When the Pharisees sought to entangle Jesus on the question of paying tribute, His reply was, “Render therefore unto Caesar the things which are Caesar’s; and unto God the things that are God’s” (Matt. 22:21).

Human nature being what it is—many men of many minds—no government on earth can please everyone. Even the Millennial Reign of Christ—a thousand years of justice, peace and righteousness—will not please everyone. A group of dissidents will rebel and try to overthrow the kingdom; this rebellion will fail, and the rebels be totally destroyed (Rev. 20:7-9).

Christians should be thankful for the protection which the temporal authority provides. They should show this thankfulness by paying their taxes, co-

operating with public officials, and enjoy their freedom within the bounds of law and order. Only if secular law conflicts with the law of God should they refuse to obey; then they must pay the penalty.

To demonstrate against the government to increase one's "freedom," to refuse to obey orders of a duly elected official, or try to entice others to this end is a clear violation of the law of God and cannot be condoned. ●●

How to Keep Healthy

IF we as Christians would maintain the strongest defense against attacks on our spiritual health, we must observe the following Scriptural prescriptions:

The first is to *dwell in the secret place*. We should live in the ninety-first Psalm. We should not pay just an occasional visit, but make it a place of perpetual habitation. "He that dwelleth in the secret place of the Most High, shall abide under the shadow of the Almighty." This is the place of protection against "pestilence," "plague," "destruction that wasteth," "the arrow that flieth," "trouble," and every attack of the enemy. Not only is life protected, but it is prolonged and eternal life is assured. The promise is, "With long life will I satisfy him, and show him my salvation." We should be careful always to dwell in God's "secret place."

Practice daily communion with God, and study His Word. Whatever our physical health, our spiritual health should prosper. "Beloved, I wish above all things that thou mayest prosper and be in health, even as thy soul prospereth" (III John 2). This life for the soul is found in the closet of prayer, with open heart and daily reading of the Word, feeding upon the words of which Jesus said, "they are spirit, and they are life." And spiritual prosperity may improve one's physical well-being.

Jesus came to give God's children their bread to sustain spiritual life. He said, "I am the bread of life." It is His spiritual bread given to provide spiritual sustenance. And by eating and assimilating this spiritual bread, we shall secure a "contented mind," hence shall have a "continual feast."

Further advice for the health-seeker is, *Do not*

worry, and do not hurry. "Be anxious for nothing." "In quietness and confidence shall be your strength" (Phil. 4:6; Isa. 30:15). We should not try to carry the whole world on our shoulders. Jesus warned against being "overcharged with . . . the cares of this life," to the exclusion of the more important eternal interests.

Maintain a good conscience. This is essential to good health. A guilty conscience will react unfavorably upon the body and disturb the natural and healthful functions, producing disorder and disease. A good conscience is a splendid stimulant to digestion, sleep, and vigor of mind and body. Paul knew the value of a good conscience. He said, "Herein do I exercise myself, to have always a conscience void of offence toward God, and toward men" (Acts 24:16). And a conscience to be all these things must be good in the sight of God; it must be a conscience educated and controlled by the Word of God.

Have a sanctified tongue. "A wholesome tongue [the healing of the tongue, margin] is a tree of life: but perverseness therein is a breach in the spirit" (Prov. 15:4). "And the tongue is a fire, a world of iniquity: so is the tongue among our members, that it defileth the whole body, and setteth on fire the course [wheel] of nature; and it is set on fire of hell [destruction]" (Jas. 3:6). An eminent physician has said: "There are diseases that originate from anger and anxiety that no medicine known to man can cure."

James speaks further, and condemningly, of the unsanctified tongue: "But the tongue can no man tame; it is an unruly evil, full of deadly poison. Therewith bless we God, even the Father; and therewith curse we men, . . . Out of the same mouth proceedeth blessing and cursing. My brethren, these things ought not so to be." James then proceeds to state the formula for both physical and spiritual health in chapter 3:6, 10, 13.

Be liberal with your substance. "The liberal soul shall be made fat: and he that watereth shall be watered also himself," says Prov. 11:25. Anything that we do to bless others will bring a blessing to us in return. "It is more blessed to give than to receive," is a saying of Jesus.

Cultivate a joyful spirit. "The joy of the Lord is your strength," says Nehemiah 8:10. This follows the previous condition of liberality, for joy and strength come with sharing the feast.

So let us "rejoice in the Lord always," sure that the "sterling temper of our faith" will bring us the blessing of spiritual health and well-being that we could obtain in no other way, and an assurance of life in the world to come where no physical weakness can ever enter. ●●

Don't Preach At Me

We don't like to be told what to do, or not to do. "Don't preach at me," we sometimes say to someone giving us some advice that is for our own good. But everyone preaches something. We preach discouragement or hope, anxiety or confidence, fear or faith. We should be like our Master who went about doing good. So often we are content with just going about.

We may not think of ourselves as a preacher, but if we are interested in the good life for ourselves and others, we should know that we are. Christians are transmitters. We are constantly broadcasting—not just a "beep-beep" but some word or other, by the way we act even when we think no one is watching. So we are all preachers, and we had better be careful of the message we proclaim.

"Lord, help me daily to preach to others simply by being my best." ●●

On Fire

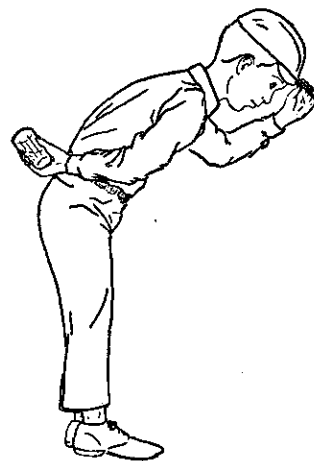
The story is told of a church which had a disastrous fire. As is usually the case, a great crowd of spectators gathered, and among them was a man known to be a skeptic. One of the church members could not refrain from saying to the man, "Well, I never saw you come so near the church before." "No," replied the skeptic, "but then I never saw the church on fire before."

We need more spiritual fire. If the church were ablaze with holy enthusiasm, if our hearts and tongues and lives were on fire for God, perhaps more people would be attracted and convinced of our sincerity. ●●

Keep Out!

There is a fable related of a camel that once came to the door of a tent, thrust his nose in, and not being resisted, stuck his feet in. Meeting no hindrance, the camel entered half way, then came completely into the tent. At this, the nomad who lived in the tent realized his uncomfortable plight. He gave the camel a slap and shouted, "Get out! This place isn't big enough for both of us." The camel had a ready answer: "Then you'd better leave. This is now my tent."

It is only a tale, but contains a grain of truth. It teaches that if sin is allowed to come into our life, it will soon take over completely. ●●



I Am Courtesy

I am a little thing with a
big meaning;
I help everybody.
I unlock doors,
I open hearts,
I dispel prejudice.
I create friendships and
good will.
I inspire respect
and admiration.
Everybody likes me.
I bore nobody.
I violate no law.
I cost nothing.
I smooth ruffled feelings,
and calm heated words.
I am pleasing to those
of high degree
and low.
I am the companion
of all Christians.
I am useful every moment
of every day.
I am Courtesy.



Learning the Hard Way

Part One



The Parkers and the Adamses were neighbors in the small town of Lud, and their ten-year old sons, Ronald and Michael, were the best of friends. They spent many hours together, playing on the old abandoned road that ran down the steep hill nearby.

But there were definite rules that were part of the play. Ronald had a wagon, and many times he had heard Dad's stern warning: "Never ride a wagon down the hill. The hill is much too steep, and you could easily run into the trees along the road. It just isn't safe." The wagon was real fun, nevertheless, and Michael wished he had one, too. But Michael's father had been sick a long time, and the Adamses just didn't have the money to buy one.

Many times Michael had seen the bright red wagon in the store in town. "Oh, how I wish it were mine," he would say to himself. Then Michael had an idea—he could earn a little money running errands, pulling weeds, and trimming lawns—and the wagon could be his! Michael went to work, and in a few months he had it made—sixteen dollars and eighty cents, just enough to buy that new wagon. He was the happiest boy in the whole neighborhood—the wagon was *his*!

"I have the very best wagon in the whole world," Michael told Ronald as he took his new treasure over to the

hill where the two boys always played. "And I think it will go faster than yours."

This comment did not please Ronald. "If your wagon is so good," he challenged, "let me see how fast it will go down this hill." And without a second thought Ronald took the wagon from Michael and started down the hill.

"Stop! Stop!" screamed Michael in horror as he raced down the hill after Ronald. But Ronald was going too fast. The road curved, and the trees came nearer and nearer. Ronald swerved to miss one, then another, then—crash! And Michael's wagon was a heap beside a tree and Ronald lay on the grass a few yards away.

Ronald got up to see what had happened. "Pretty good," he said to himself as he examined his skinned knee underneath a large tear in his trousers. Then he looked up, to see Michael crying. Ronald ran for home as fast as he could. Poor Michael stayed to pick up the pieces. He loaded them onto the remains of the wreck, and dragged his wagon home, crying all the way.

Ronald's mother met him at the door. "Whatever happened to you, Ronald?" Her face looked serious, and Ronald wondered what he would tell her.

"Oh, I—I—I just fell down. Just skinned my knee a little."

"Come," said his mother. "let's wash that knee and I'll put a bandage on it. Then you can rest, while you think what happened."

The knee was bandaged, and Ronald changed his clothes and snuggled down in a corner of the big chair in the living room. If he knew his mother, he'd be sitting there quite a while.

Mother was busy with her work about the house. She would look in on him occasionally, but Ronald had not a word to say. Then he could hear the kettles in the kitchen. Mother was preparing supper. Soon Dad would be home. And what was Ronald going to tell him?

Just then he heard the door. It was Dad. Ronald heard him greet Mother. And then—

"Well, my boy, what happened to you today? Looks like the knee got a little rough treatment."

"Oh, it's not too bad. I—I just fell down," he said, half apologetic. "It'll be all right soon. I'm—I'm all right."

Mother had supper on the table shortly and called Ronald to join her and Dad.

Mr. Parker had just offered thanks when the doorbell rang. It was Mr. Adams.

"Why, good evening, Mr. Adams!" Mr. Parker was always friendly. "How are you this evening?"

"Not so good, I'm afraid." Mr. Adams was rather gruff. "Your son took Michael's wagon from him and rode it down the hill and it is all broken to pieces. Michael will tell you what happened, if Ronald won't."

With this, Mr. Parker called to Ronald, but Ronald had disappeared. "He was just here, I'm sure he'll be right back. Won't you come in and sit down? Let me take your jackets, and I will hang them here in the closet." Mr. Parker took their jackets and opened the closet door, and—

There in the corner by the coats was Ronald. "Why Ronald! Well, well—Mr. Adams and Michael are here. They want to talk to you about something."

Ronald stalked into the living room, trying to appear as big as he could in front of Michael, who was all of two months younger. Then Michael told the whole story while Mr. and Mrs. Parker listened.

"So that's how your knee got hurt. Didn't I tell you never to coast down that hill?" Mr. Parker's voice was stern.

"Y-y-yes," quivered Ronald, "but I wouldn't have done it if Michael hadn't been bragging and bragging about what a wonderful wagon he had."

"That has nothing to do with it, Son. You were told never to go down that hill on a wagon. We will have to settle this matter later. Now," he turned to Mr. Adams, "I will see if I can make arrangements to repair the wagon."

"But Mr. Parker," spouted Michael, "Daddy says it's broken so bad that it can't be fixed. And it cost me sixteen dollars and eighty cents!" Michael broke into tears once again.

"Don't worry, Michael," Mr. Parker spoke very kindly. "I will give you the \$16.80 and you can get a new one exactly like the broken one." Mr. Parker immediately gave Michael the money.

"Thank you, Mr. Parker. Now can I get a new one, Dad?"

"Yes, a new one exactly like the broken one."

When Mr. Adams and Michael had gone, Mr. Parker turned to Ronald.

"Now we will have to settle up."

"But Dad, I don't have any money. I won't ever disobey you again, and I won't lie to Mom and you either."

"You had better remember this lesson, Ronald, because if you forget, you will find out that I didn't." Father was still stern, but Ronald was satisfied inside. "I got out of that one pretty good," he told himself as once again they sat down to supper.

Ronald Forgets

It was a bright June day, and Ronald was out in the street riding his bicycle. His mother looked out the kitchen window—and she could hardly believe what she saw. Ronald was right in the middle of the traffic and he was riding without using his hands! She was afraid to call to him, lest she distract him and make him lose his balance. So she waited until he came in. "Ronald, you must *always* keep your hands *on the handlebars* when you ride in the street," she told him firmly. "There are too many cars around, and it is not safe otherwise. Sometime you may get hurt, or you may hurt someone else." Ronald understood.

Not too many days later Mrs. Parker went shopping. "I won't be gone long, Son. Only a few errands. Take care, and I'll be back to get supper before Dad gets home."

Ronald saw his chance. "This is the time for me to practice riding without using my hands," he told himself. "Mother will never know it. Anyway, she doesn't know how good I am at it. Maybe even safer than when using my hands!"

When Mrs. Parker had disappeared down the street, Ronald went out to get his bicycle. "And this time, I will see how fast I can go."

All went well for a time, until his front wheel struck a little round stone in the road that Ronald hadn't seen. Almost before Ronald knew what had happened, he hit the stone and crashed into the side of a brand new car that was parked on the side of the street. The owner of the car happened to be on the street, posting a letter in the

mailbox, and heard the crash. "Are you hurt?" he called out as he came running over to his car.

Ronald disentangled himself from his bicycle and stood up. "No, I—I'm all right, I guess. Just bumped my head a little."

The man looked at his car. There was a dent in the door, and a bad scrape in the shiny yellow paint. "Look here, young man!" The man was angry. "Where is your father, or mother?"

Ronald just looked at the man; he didn't know what to say. "Where is your father—or mother?"

"I—I live right over here, Sir," Ronald replied as he looked over toward the house to see his mother just driving into the garage. She had seen him, he was sure.

The stranger and Ronald started toward Ronald's house, and met Mrs. Parker in the yard. The man was still excited. "Are you this boy's mother? I want you to see what he did to my new car. I want to know who's going to pay for this!"

Mrs. Parker was a well-controlled woman, and her calm answers to the stranger soon quieted his rage. While they were still talking in front of the Parker house, Mr. Parker stepped off the bus. "Good evening," he greeted the stranger. "Were you all out here waiting for me?"

"Suppose we let Ronald tell you," suggested Mrs. Parker.

Ronald said nothing for a moment. "I had better tell the truth this time," he thought to himself. And so he began. "I was riding my bicycle, and I wasn't using my hands."

"You weren't using your hands?" interrupted his mother.

"N-n-no," Ronald's face dropped. "And I hit a stone and smashed into this man's new car."

"And you should see my car," the stranger interposed. "This is going to cost you something. The door, as well as the front fender, will have to be painted. And mind you, it had better match!"

"We will see that it gets repaired properly," volunteered Mr. Parker.

"And Ronald will pay the bill, whatever it is." The two men discussed estimates and repairs and insurance, while Mrs. Parker and Ronald went inside the house. The words of the stranger kept going through his mind

—"This is going to cost you something." "This is going to cost you"—and that meant Ronald Parker! No, Dad didn't forget, even if Ronald did. "What's it going to cost?" was Ronald's first question when Dad came in.

"About \$150.00 Ronald."

"But Dad, my bicycle needs some fixing, too. And I don't have that much."

"I know it, my boy. I have a plan. We'll talk about it tomorrow." ●●

NEXT ISSUE: RONALD GOES TO WORK

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

"You teach that Elijah is coming before Christ. Now in Matthew 17:10, when the scribe asked about Elijah's coming again, Jesus said that he, *Elias*, had already come but they knew him not; the disciples then knew that He spake of John the Baptist."

In Matthew 17 Jesus spoke of the coming of two forerunners before His *two* comings. In verse 10 the disciples asked Him, "Why then say the scribes that Elias must first come?" And Jesus answered them, "Elias truly shall first come, and restore all things" (vs. 10-11). Jesus' answer was in the future tense: "Elias truly *shall* first come." John the Baptist had come, had been beheaded by Herod—and was dead, when Jesus said, "Elias truly shall first come." He could not have referred to John, but to the prophecy of Mal. 4:5-6. Then in v. 12, Jesus, speaking of John the Baptist, continued: "But I say unto you, that Elias is come already, and they knew him not, but have done unto him whatsoever they listed... Then the disciples understood that he spake unto them of John the Baptist" (vs. 12-13). I repeat, Jesus spoke of two forerunners preceding two different comings. And His listeners understood what He was saying.

"How shall we be saved from Armageddon?"

The prophet Joel informs us how people will be spared during the Battle of Armageddon. He speaks of the time when God will show "wonders in the heavens and in the earth, blood, and fire, and pillars of smoke [signs in the political heavens and earth]. The sun shall be turned into darkness, and the moon into blood." (Joel 2:30-31). The Prophet also foresaw a plan for the deliverance of the righteous: "And it shall come to pass, that whosoever shall call on the name of the Lord shall be delivered: for in mount Zion and in Jerusalem shall be deliverance, as the Lord hath said, and in the remnant whom the Lord shall call" (v. 32).

"Can you tell me what is the 'better thing' which God has prepared for us (Heb. 8:6; 11:40)?"

In chapter 8, the author is comparing the potency of the priesthood under the old Mosaic arrangement with that of Christ's "more excellent priesthood," the latter being established upon "better promises."

The "better thing" of Hebrews 11:40 was the arrangement whereby faithful Christians of all ages will receive their reward together; we who are living in this the "cool" of the day of salvation will experience no disadvantage as compared with those enumerated in Hebrews 11, who had endured painful persecutions during the "heat" of the day. It will be a fulfillment of Jesus' promise, that the "first shall be last, and the last first" (Mark 9:35; 10:31). ●●

Obituary

William C. Sanders

We have received word of the death of a long-time subscriber, reader and zealous brother, William C. Sanders, of Swansea, South Wales, United Kingdom. Brother Sanders, about 84 years of age, passed away on July 24, after suffering from ill health for a number of years.

Brother Sanders' acquaintance with Megiddo teaching dates back many years to the time when our founder, Rev. L. T. Nichols, visited interested brethren in the British Isles, some of whom were members of the Sanders family. Our brother was convinced of the truthfulness of the Bible, and looked forward expectantly to the coming of Jesus and Elijah, which we believe to be imminent. Always ready to witness for the cause of true religion, he defended the faith loyally to all he chanced to meet.

Brother Sanders is survived by his wife, Sister Mabel Sanders, who cared faithfully for his every need. He is also survived by many cousins, some of whom are active corresponding members of the Megiddo Church and who with Sister Sanders share a lively hope of the Day when the dead in Christ shall rise. ●●

UNDERSTANDING THE BIBLE

"Study to shew thyself approved unto God."

Man and the Earth

WHERE did the first man come from? When did men first inhabit the earth? And what about the earth we inhabit—was it created in one 24-hour day out of nothing about 6000 years ago? Or did the proper materials just happen to come together in space to form another planet to provide a home for the human race?

Scientists, theologians and just ordinary men and women have pondered these questions for centuries, trying to harmonize the two views. In the minds of some, the Bible contradicts science; others hold that science disproves the Bible. The many theories that have been advanced on the subject fill unnumbered volumes on library shelves. But could we learn the truth of the subject were we to read them all?

For centuries men accepted the idea that all things were created by God, an All-wise, All-powerful Being, and that He was in control of the earth and all things upon it. But as education became more widespread, men began to question the accepted theories of their forefathers and to turn to their own reasoning.

Education, in the early days of England and of our own country, was based largely upon the Bible, the Holy Scriptures being the only textbook many of the early statesmen knew. But as men began to turn to the writings of other men for their knowledge, they questioned the words of God. Perhaps God's Book was no different than any other book, of human origin and not divine, they reasoned. And could not the Bible be better understood by comparing it with the works of men? How do we know God created anything? What proof have we that God had anything to do with the formation of life upon the earth?

Such vain reasonings of men led to the development of the theory of evolution, a subject we will study in this lesson, following our outline:

- I. The Theory of Evolution
 - A. History of the Theory
 - B. Basic Theories of Evolution

At the present time, a controversy is raging between supporters of two religious points of view concerning the formation of life on the earth. The contest is between those identifying themselves as the Creationists and the Evolutionists. Not since the famous Scopes trial of a half-century ago has the subject been so much debated. The Evolutionists' theory is that man is the product of long ages of a process known as "natural selection" through which man developed from a single cell into his present form. The Creationists' viewpoint stems from a literal interpretation of the first few chapters of Genesis and holds that God created the earth and all living things in six 24-hour days out of nothing about 6000 years ago.

Which theory is correct? What shall we believe? Is either theory Biblical? We will study the subject in the light of Bible knowledge.

I. THE THEORY OF EVOLUTION

A truly scientific method is to analyze all the facts and then to draw a conclusion. The theory of evolution was formulated in reverse; it is a case of attempting to prove a preconceived conclusion. A study of existing life on earth convinced some scientists that all life began with a one-celled organism and arrived at its highest state, the human being, by means of a series of biological changes and "accidents" that took place over a period of millions of years. The theory holds that all life originated in the sea, and that gradually living things came out of the sea to live on the land.

Having developed the theory, scientists sought to find proof in the rocks of the earth. If, as it is claimed, all life evolved from a one-celled organism, surely we should find evidence of the stages of such development in fossils that have been excavated from the earth. If the giant dinosaurs died and left their bones imbedded in the earth's crust, why did not developing animals do likewise?

This is one of the questions evolutionists cannot answer. Scientists who support the view admit that the difficulties raised by the theory itself are staggering. They confess that "everything concerning

the process is far from completely known," that "the causes are only dimly discerned," that "the evidence itself is very imperfect and often interrupted by gaps that cannot be explained" and that they "are as yet ignorant as to what brought about the changes" in the development of life.

With all its acknowledged gaps and weaknesses, the theory is generally accepted as fact in the educational field. School textbooks are written to sound authoritative and few students (or even teachers) study the subject thoroughly enough to notice the missing links. A high school science textbook in current use states flatly: "All reputable biologists have agreed that the evolution of life on the earth is an established fact."

But can a theory rightly be called a fact? We might call white black, but that does not make it so. The **Encyclopedic Dictionary** defines a **fact** as "something that actually exists or has actually occurred; something known by observation or experience to be true or real: a scientific fact." The same dictionary defines a **theory** as "a plan or scheme existing in the mind only; a speculative or conjectural view of something." Hence, a **theory cannot be a fact; the two are poles apart. Evolution is but a theory, the result of the imagination of men's minds; it is purely conjecture.**

A. History of the Theory

Although some scientists advanced theories similar to the present-day concept of evolution much earlier, it was not until the latter part of the nineteenth century that the theory gained prominence. Ancient zoological writers included in their works recipes purported to produce such things as bees, flies and mice from inanimate matter, but their recipes didn't work and were soon forgotten.

The name Darwin has come to be synonymous with evolution. His book, **The Origin of Species**, provided the basis for the accepted theory of evolution. Darwin's theory of "natural selection" was that members of different species competed with one another for life, always ending with the "survival of the fittest." He claimed that the surviving species passed on their own special characteristics which had enabled them to survive, and that this process, repeated from generation to generation over a period of millions of years, resulted in new forms of life.

Darwin's book was published in the middle of the nineteenth century; and in the century and one quarter since, his ideas have been frequently challenged. As a result, new theories have been advanced from time to time, though all built upon Darwin's base. The present-day teaching on the sub-

ject is a combination of the Darwinian theory and the views of other eminent evolutionists.

Briefly stated, the present-day theory is that evolution proceeds by natural selection together with mutations. (A mutation is a sudden variation in a plant or animal.) These mutations, passed along by heredity over a period of millions of years, resulted in other beneficial mutations in the same organism, eventually causing the organism to change into a different one. The process has been going on for so long that it is supposed to have produced all the groups and kinds of life we now have on the earth, plus others that lived in past ages and have become extinct.

With the formulation of the present-day theory, one evolutionist said: "The problem of evolution has been thoroughly, completely, and definitely resolved. With mutation and natural selection, the perfect explanation is at our disposal."

Another prominent evolutionist has said that "evolution had no room for the supernatural. The earth and its inhabitants were not created, they evolved. We all accept the fact of evolution. . . . the evolution of life is no longer a theory. It is a fact. It is the basis of all our thinking."

But is it the "perfect explanation"? Can it be proved? Let us look at some of evolution's claims.

B. Basic Theories of Evolution

Could it be possible that life sprang up by itself from inanimate matter? Were we to accept the theory of evolution, we would be forced to believe that it did. Many accept the theory, believing that it is the only reasonable explanation available. And strange as it may seem, many of the clergy are numbered among the believers.

For anything to evolve upward is contrary to the known laws of nature. That which is left to itself tends downward, not upward. Every living thing, from plants and animals to man, the highest order of animal, decays gradually and dies in time. Metal left exposed to the elements rusts and in course of time disintegrates. Wind and water wear down the rocks and erode the soil.

Nothing animate or inanimate improves itself, yet it is on such a theory that evolution is based. Could we expect a brick left long enough in a vacant lot to become a ten-story office building? Were we to assemble the necessary parts to an electric motor in a barrel, would they form themselves into a motor if stirred long enough? Could you imagine a dictionary resulting from an explosion in a printing shop? Did an accident ever improve anything?

To imagine such things happening is ludicrous,

but it is even more ridiculous to imagine the evolution of a human being, to think that so complex a mechanism as the human body came about by a series of scientific accidents.

Let us examine some of the theories of evolution in more detail.

1. Life began in the sea. Evolutionists claim that all life began in the sea from a single-celled creature known as an amoeba. Over a period of millions, perhaps billions of years, this little animal is supposed to have developed into other forms of life.

The evolution story reads like a fairy tale: The first living things must have been molecules possessing that which distinguishes the living from the nonliving, the ability to reproduce themselves. They must have first taken shape in the sea, . . . life stepped forth from the sea relatively late in geological times. . . . We may imagine some of the circumstances that attended their formation, . . . an oceanic vat of minerals in which compounds combined and recombined until the right combination was finally reached. Whatever the complex chemistry of life, . . . it eventually led to the evolution of simple single-celled organisms. [This is referred to as the first giant leap.]

Then followed a second leap considered almost as important as the "leap into life." Living organisms acquired the ability to convert sunlight into energy—not instantly, but over a long period of time, resulting in oxygen in the air and in the water. Plants grew on the land and life thrived in the sea. Animals thrived in the water and diversified from single-celled to many-celled forms. . . . Multi-cellular animals evolved mouths, stomachs, body cavities, nervous systems, coordinated means of locomotion—typical features of animals.

As yet the sea remained the nursery of life. No animal had evolved capable of venturing on to the land. But in the age that followed, fish—the first animals with backbones—arrived in abundance. . . . Soon afterward the first animal, a small sea scorpion, crawled up the beach and stayed. . . . In the following era, fish diversified into forms easily recognizable as kin to modern fish. A few of them followed the scorpion ashore and became the first land-dwelling vertebrates. Man is descended from one such land-invading fish. *

This, briefly, is the theory of the evolution of life. But such a theory presents unanswerable questions: From where did the matter come that formed those first molecules that came alive? What is the proof that single-celled organisms became many-

celled when the single-celled amoeba is prevalent today? **The author lends no credence to the Almighty Creator; God is not mentioned. Can we look at the great variety of living things with which we are familiar and even imagine that all evolved from life in the sea? No, the theory is too preposterous for the Christian to accept.**

The single-celled amoeba, a tiny speck of life smaller than the head of a pin, can be found today in any stagnant water. If evolution were true, we should be able to locate some that are now developing into other forms of life. But nothing like this has ever been reported. **The amoeba, like all life, came into being by the act of a Creator. Nothing ever lived without having been given the breath of life by a higher Power. Nehemiah, inspired of God, testified of the Creator: "Thou, even thou, art Lord alone; thou hast made heaven, the heaven of heavens, with all their hosts, the earth, and all things that are therein, the seas, and all that is therein, and thou preservest them all; and the host of heaven worshippeth thee" (Neh. 9:6).**

2. Acquired characteristics. One of the earliest theories to gain acceptance in the evolutionary field was that of acquired characteristics. The theory was developed long before the days of Darwin and was built into his theory. Naturalists who sponsored the theory contended that plants and animals acquired new characteristics from their environment as needed and passed them on to their offspring. The long-necked giraffe (many have necks eight feet long) was pointed out as an example. In past ages giraffes were said to have had shorter necks. In their struggle for existence they competed for leaves on the trees, and those with slightly longer necks survived. Through many generations of the survival of the long-necked giraffes, who in turn passed the characteristic to their offspring, the neck of the giraffe supposedly reached its present length.

The theory was generally accepted until the 20th century, but scientists proved to their own satisfaction that such acquired characteristics could not be inherited. One scientist tried cutting off the tails of laboratory mice for 20 generations with the hope of developing tailless mice, but the last generation had tails as long as the first!

Acquired characteristics are not inherited. Each of the more than one million species that inhabit this earth has its own special characteristic with which it was created. Nothing was left to chance; all Creation was according to a master plan. Fish cannot live on the land, nor can men live in the water; God planned it thus. Every creature has

* Leonard Engel, *The Sea*, pp. 39-41.

its place and its own means of survival; all existence did not depend on the "survival of the fittest," for the sheep with little or no neck grazes the ground on which the giraffe with his eight-foot neck walks!

3. The development of man. As mentioned previously, the evolutionary theory includes man as well as all other life. Evolutionists assume that man developed from the life that began in the sea, as stated by the author quoted, "Man is descended from one such land-invading fish."

This "land-invading fish" supposedly grew limbs, eventually raising his forelimbs from the ground and standing upright. Prehistoric man [those who lived before the earliest date of world history] are pictured by the artist as beastly-looking, stooped creatures with the features of an ape. Plaster-cast figures of such "prehistoric men" are to be found in most museums in the world.

Where is the proof that early man did not stand erect? How do 20th century artists know what the features of men looked like a half-million or more years ago? The truth is that they do not. Pictures to be found in encyclopedias and textbooks are merely an artist's conception of early man. No complete or nearly complete skeleton of an early man has ever been located. The only thing evolutionists have to offer by way of evidence are a few human skulls that have been found in widely separated parts of the earth.

Even the evolutionists themselves cannot agree on how man developed. Great gaps of time appear in the line of man's development, gaps covering periods of millions of years. Without written history, fossils or any type of tangible evidence for these periods, anything written today is pure guesswork. Some are willing to admit it. Said one, "The nature of the line leading to living man remains a matter of pure theory"; and said another, "Investigators have yet to trace the origins of the human line." And a leading newspaper reported, "Even today surprisingly little is known of man's own family tree; there are still enormous gaps."

But for all their questioning of the evolutionary theory, men do not turn to the only One who has the answer to the question: Where did man come from? The answer is to be found in God's Word, the Bible. God's answer to the question is not laden with subjunctives, but is straight-forward and unequivocal: "Thus says the Lord, Israel's Holy One, his maker: Would you dare question me concerning my children, or instruct me in my handiwork? I alone, I made the earth and created man upon it" (Isa. 45:12, New English Bible). And the same God is in control of the lives of those He

created: "In whose hand is the soul [life, margin] of every living thing, and the breath of all mankind. . . . If he gather unto himself his spirit and his breath; all flesh shall perish together, and man shall turn again unto dust" (Job 12:10; 34:14-15). The breath of life came from God; and should He take it away, all life would cease.

Man's theory of evolution says that "animals evolved mouths, stomachs, body cavities, nervous systems, etc." and that man descended from such animals. But can we imagine that anything so complex as a human body—or the body of an animal—could be formed by chance or by accident? **All the known substances churning together for an eternity past could not have produced one living thing without God to give it the life principle.**

The human brain makes man superior to the animal creation. The potential of the human brain is nothing short of fantastic. It has been estimated that the human brain absorbs as many as one million billion separate bits of information in an ordinary lifetime. The human brain is made up of some ten billion grey cells, or neurons. These neurons make thousands of connections with each other, multiplying virtually to infinity the brain's capacity for receiving and analyzing data. It is this power to handle data that puts man in a category superior to any other living thing.

Could we imagine that such could be a product of chance? a happenstance? a result of evolution or the "survival of the fittest" in the animal world? No, man could have come into possession of anything so marvelous as his brain in no other way than by the work of an Almighty Creator. Only an Omnipotent God could provide man with intelligence far above the animals.

God through His prophet says: "I have made the earth, and created man upon it." Have we any reason to doubt the words of our Creator? **Man was created separate and distinct from the animals and he remains so today. Our common sense tells us that evolution is only a theory of men and cannot be proved.**

Memorize

"Thus saith the Lord, the Holy One of Israel, and his Maker, . . .

"I have made the earth, and created man upon it: I, even my hands, have stretched out the heavens, and all their host have I commanded" (Isa. 45:11-12).

Reprints of these studies are available upon request.

ISRAEL

Yesterday

Today

Tomorrow

Introduction

We have traced the people of Israel through a long day of opportunity, and have found that the majority spurned it. It has ever been thus. God's way is a higher way, and it is too restrictive and too difficult for the pleasure-minded throng.

Though present-day Israel does not seem to figure significantly in the plan of God, this ancient site is not forgotten. In fact, both the land of Israel and its inhabitants are included in God's plans for the future.

Israel and the Future

ALTHOUGH we are not told all we would like to know, we do know that Israel is destined to play an important role in future events.

1) Christ will establish His headquarters of government in the city of Jerusalem. According to Bible prophecy, "the Lord shall inherit Judah his portion in the holy land, and shall choose Jerusalem again" (Zech. 2:12). Also, "the Lord of hosts shall reign in mount Zion, and in Jerusalem, and before his ancients gloriously" (Isa. 24:23). Jesus called Jerusalem the "city of the great King" (Matt. 5:35). Jerusalem was for centuries the seat of authority from which David's royal line of kings governed. And it shall be the center of authority in the new government. "Out of Zion shall go forth the law, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem" (Isa. 2:3).

2) The land of Israel will be the starting point for the Battle of Armageddon—which will spread until it involves all the nations of the earth in one last mighty struggle between the forces of Christ and His adversaries. (The name of the battle—"Armageddon"—is derived from "Har Megiddo," which means "Mount of Megiddo.") We read, "And he gathered them together into a place called in the Hebrew tongue Armageddon" (Rev. 16:16).

The results of this great conflict are known in advance—no power on earth can defeat the plan of

God. Christ's new government shall retain its authority, and "the nation and kingdom that will not serve thee shall perish" (Isa. 60:12). "The nation and kingdom"—*any* nation or kingdom not willing to submit to the new authority—shall perish; whether Israelite, Arab or Japanese, all must recognize the new power over them—there will be no preferment for any people.

Christ's new government will be a kingdom, and Christ will be in the fullest sense of the term a *king*. In Him shall be vested supreme authority. He shall "reign over the house of Jacob for ever; and of his kingdom there shall be no end" (Luke 1:32). His government shall be the ancient kingdom of Israel restored—but its borders shall be as broad as the earth. The promise is, "He shall have dominion also from sea to sea, and from the river unto the ends of the earth" (Ps. 72:8). "The Lord shall be king over all the earth" (Zech. 14:9). "All nations" shall be the subjects of His domain. "Yea, all kings shall fall down before him: all nations shall serve him. . . . And men shall be blessed in him: all nations shall call him blessed" (Ps. 72:11, 17).

Why then do numerous texts say that Christ shall repossess the ancient throne of David and reign over the people of Israel?

Christ came of the seed of Abraham, in a direct line of descent from David; thus He is called the son of David (Acts 2:29-30; Gal. 3:16). The kingdom of Israel, over which David ruled, was a type-illustration of the future Kingdom which shall belong to Christ. Israel was God's government upon earth, a government under His direct supervision; hence the kingdom of Israel was called the "throne of the Lord" (I Chron. 29:23). The kingdom of Christ shall likewise be the "throne of the Lord," but in a broader and more extended sense.

Defining the future government as the "kingdom of David" or the "tabernacle of David" (Acts 15:16-17) gives a sense of reality and tangibility to what might otherwise be an undefined term. Every Israelite understood the meaning of the "tabernacle

of David," or "the throne of David" (Isa. 9:6-7), and when its significance was projected forward it became an illustration people could grasp. They could think of the future Kingdom in terms of the kingdom with which they were familiar. Hence, Jeremiah wrote the promise of the Lord: "I will raise unto David a righteous Branch, and a King shall reign and prosper, and shall execute judgment and justice in the earth"—not in Jeremiah's day, but in the far distant future (Jer. 23:5-6). The terms "Judah" and "Israel" were also drawn from the time in which the Prophet was speaking, for these terms included the people of the Lord at that time.

The prophet Ezekiel, speaking for the Lord, used the same terminology: "And David my servant shall be king over them; and they all shall have one shepherd: they shall also walk in my judgments, and observe my statutes, and do them. And they shall dwell in the land that I have given unto Jacob my servant, wherein your fathers have dwelt; and they shall dwell therein, even they, and their children, and their children's children for ever: and my servant David shall be their prince for ever" (Ezek. 37:24-25). The Lord used David as a type of Christ, and "Jacob" as illustrative of the people over whom Christ shall reign—not all natural Israel, but faithful children of God, those "worthy of the name" of Israel.

The people who heard Jesus preach, being primarily Israelites, used the language of the prophets of Israel when addressing Christ at His triumphal entrance into Jerusalem. They shouted, "Blessed be the kingdom of our father David, that cometh in the name of the Lord" (Mark 11:10). They knew that Christ had no physical authority over the "kingdom of our father David" at that time. They were simply identifying Him by His lineage.

The disciples who were with Jesus just prior to His ascension were expecting Christ to establish a physical kingdom, and they asked Him, "Lord, wilt thou at this time restore again the kingdom to Israel?" (Acts 1:6). Their understanding of the prophets was incomplete, and they may have anticipated a physical restoration of the government of ancient Israel. But Jesus told them they would receive power by which all things would be revealed to them, and by which they should witness beyond the borders of Israel (Acts 1:6-8). And only ten days hence, the apostle Peter showed that his understanding had already increased, for he reiterated Joel's prophecy of the day when God would "pour out of [His] Spirit upon all flesh"—not upon Israel alone, but upon *all* flesh; and "it shall come to pass, that whosoever"—whatever his nationality

—"shall call on the name of the Lord shall be saved" (Acts 2:17, 21). The plan is much broader than the restored kingdom of Israel could encompass.

There is yet another factor which definitely separates promises pertaining to the literal kingdom of Israel from those relating to Christ's future kingdom—that is the element of duration. He who should "reign over the house of Jacob for ever" must necessarily be an eternal King reigning over an immortal people. Likewise, He who should "reign over them in mount Zion from henceforth, even for ever" (Isa. 9:6-7; Mic. 4:7) or the "David" who "shall be their prince for ever" (Ezek. 37:25) cannot possibly apply to the man David who reigned in Israel some three millenniums ago. And if "David" is used figuratively for the eternal, superior King, even Jesus Christ, why could not the "house of Jacob" be taken also as a figure of God's true and faithful family, even *spiritual* Israel?

Will Natural Israel Return?

Some people believe that God selected Israel on a permanent and absolute covenant basis, and that God is unfaithful if He does not eventually save all of them. They feel that God's rejection of Israel was only temporary, and not a repudiation of His covenant with them; that they were to be rejected as a people only "until the fulness of the Gentiles be come in," at which time "all Israel" shall be accepted in their sinful condition, be forgiven, cleansed and saved.

We have already proved that Israel was *not* chosen on an absolute covenant basis. The covenant was *conditional*, the condition being Israel's obedience. But if this be true, what about Paul's words in Romans, chapter 11?

We have seen how Paul repeatedly affirmed the equality of Jew and Gentile in the sight of God; both had to belong to Christ before they could be saved; natural Israelites had no advantage simply by being Israelites. "For they are not all Israel, which are of Israel: neither because they are the seed of Abraham, are they all children" (Rom. 9:6-7).

Israel as a nation did not merit God's eternal favor. In Paul's own words, they proved to be a "disobedient and gainsaying people" (Rom. 10:21). Therefore, as a nation God rejected them.

However, in rejecting them as a nation He did not reject all Israelites individually, for Paul himself was an Israelite, "of the seed of Abraham, of the tribe of Benjamin" (Rom. 11:1). God never rejected good material. He never cast away one

whom He foreknew would prove a loyal servant for His kingdom. Israel as a nation was cast off, but "a remnant" remained (11:5)—there never had been more than a "remnant" of truly faithful Israelites, whom God regarded as fit for His eternal purposes. And this "remnant," says Paul, are the saving salt in a corrupt world, accepted on the same basis as the Gentiles who were then coming in—not by their observance of laws and formalities and empty works of the law of Moses, to which the Jews held, but "according to the election of grace" (11:5).

A "remnant" of Israel was accepted, and "the rest were blinded." Paul speaks of God's doing that which He allowed to be done. "The rest were blinded" because, as Jesus said of those same rebellious Jews, "their ears are dull of hearing, and their eyes they have closed; lest at any time they should see with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and should understand with their heart, and should be converted, and I should heal them" (Matt. 13:15).

All Things Work For Good

Paul proceeds to show how God makes every situation—even that which might seem disadvantageous—to work to the ultimate fulfillment of

His goal. In His purposes and goals there can be no defeat. Because the Jews did not achieve the inheritance to which they were originally called, God now extends the opportunity to the Gentiles. So Paul sees the rejection of the Jews as God giving opportunity to the Gentiles. For if all the Jews who had been given opportunity had made use of that opportunity and had proved obedient and believing, God's foreknown number for salvation would have been filled without any Gentiles being included.

Therefore Paul says, "I say then, Have they stumbled that they should fall? God forbid: but rather through their fall salvation is come unto the Gentiles, for to provoke them to jealousy" (11:11). Paul is hopeful that the Jews, seeing Gentiles obtaining the promises they rejected, might be stirred to emulation and return to God.

Paul recognizes the divine purpose moving toward a goal, and every event now and future he sees as contributing to that goal. The disobedience of natural Israel means enrichment to the Gentiles, because it is their means of opportunity; and if this is true, as Paul affirms it is, how much more significant will be the Jews' coming to "full strength," as it is phrased in the New English Bible: "Because they [the Jews] offended, salvation has come to the Gentiles, to stir Israel to emu-

A Prayer

Our heavenly Father, once again we bow in humbleness before Thy throne, realizing that we are indebted to Thee for the blessing of life and health, for our goodly mortal frame, for the use of our faculties, for shelter, for the sustenance necessary to maintain our bodies, and above all for the opportunity of becoming partakers of the divine nature and escaping the eternal destruction which is the lot of all who ignore Thee and go their own way.

We thank Thee that we have found Thy Word, that the way of life has been made plain and comprehensive to us. Grant that to eat Thy Word may become the joy and rejoicing of our hearts, that Thy divine law may be a restraining influence through each moment of every day. May we, like our Pattern, always delight to do Thy will. Help us to realize this is the only key to the Kingdom, the only type of effort that will open to us the portals of eternal rest.

May we be all absorbed with the creative work of taking forth the precious from the vile, first in our own lives and then in helping others. Grant us the vision to see that every transgression of Thy law causes the filthy rags of unrighteousness to come on, making us vile in Thy sight. The anger, the malice, the hatred, the self-esteem, the pride and stubbornness, all these defile us; while acts of kindness, patience, concern for the welfare of others, humbleness, are precious to Thee.

May the hope of an eternal existence be so fixed in our minds that we will always be watchful and alert, that a desire for the change from an old to a new creature may be paramount, so that the things we once loved we will now hate, and the things we formerly hated may become our greatest delight.

Be with those everywhere who are longing and working for that Better Day. May Thine angel encamp about them and us, as Thou hast promised; and may all things work together for our good, for the purification of our lives. And may Thy kingdom come and Thy will be done in earth as it is in heaven.

In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.

lation. But if their offence means the enrichment of the world, and if their falling-off means the enrichment of the Gentiles, how much more their coming to full strength" (11:12).

The last phrase of this verse has had many interpretations, and Paul's exact meaning is difficult to trace. He may be speculating on what would happen if all his fellow-kinsmen should suddenly turn to God. Or more likely, he is looking ahead to the day when Christ will call upon all the Jews and all other people to submit to His new and righteous authority. Should a large number of Jews submit at that time, how significant and dramatic the result!

But Paul does not expect all of Israel to turn to God, for in Romans 11:14, he speaks again of his desire to stir his brethren to emulation, if "by any means" he "might save some of them"—not *all* of them or *many* of them, but "some of them."

"For if their rejection has meant the reconciliation of the world, what will their acceptance mean? Nothing less than life from the dead!" (Rom. 11:15, NEB)—a very strong expression for the greatest conceivable blessing. (Neither Paul nor any other Biblical author teaches a universal resurrection of mankind as part of the plan of God—see Jer. 51:57; Obadiah 16; Ps. 49:19-20.) All Israel turning to God, after so many years of estrangement, would be like a resurrection from the dead. The Jews as a nation paying no heed to God now are as dead in His sight; when they change, they will come alive.

Paul draws metaphors from the Old Testament, where the firstfruits of the harvest was always presented to God so that the rest of the harvest might be fit for food. This is one more advantage the Jews had had as a nation: their forefathers having offered themselves to God and been accepted, these Jews could have done likewise—and they would have been accepted just as their fathers were. "For if the first portion of dough is consecrated, so is the whole lump. If the root is consecrated, so are the branches" (Rom. 11:16). No one but the Israelites themselves are to blame for failure and their rejection—as Paul said earlier in the chapter, they had the richest heritage any people could have. All factors were in favor of their proving themselves suitable material before God.

But in spite of it all, they proved to be worthless. The patriarchal root was holy, consecrated, set apart for God; but these branches were fit only to be removed—they were unworthy of the sustenance of the root.

Paul addresses Gentiles: "Some of the branches [natural Israelites] have been lopped off, and you,

a wild olive, have been grafted in among them, and have come to share the same root and sap as the olive"—a privilege indeed! But a warning follows: "Do not make yourself superior to the branches. If you do so, remember that it is not you who sustain the root: the root sustains you" (11:17-18, NEB). The Gentiles are dependent on the whole Jewish heritage of the Old Testament and its

All the World

All the world shall come to serve Thee,
And bless Thy glorious Name,
And Thy righteousness triumphant
The islands shall acclaim.
Yea, the peoples shall go seeking
Who knew Thee not before,
And the ends of earth shall praise Thee,
And tell Thy greatness o'er.

They shall build for Thee their altars,
Their idols overthrown,
And their graven gods shall shame them
As they turn to Thee alone.
They shall worship Thee at sunrise
And feel Thy kingdom's might
And impart Thy understanding,
To those astray in night.

With the coming of Thy kingdom
The hills will shout with song,
And the islands laugh exultant,
That they to God belong.
And through all Thy congregations,
So loud Thy praise shall ring,
That the utmost peoples, hearing,
Shall hail Thee crowned King!
—by Israel Zangwill,
translated from the Hebrew
"Vaye-esayu"

promises, its patriarchs and prophets; this heritage sustains their spiritual lives; they cannot cut themselves off from it and live.

Paul emphasizes his point: "You will say, 'Branches were lopped off so that I might be grafted in.' Very well: they were lopped off for lack of faith, and by faith you hold your place. Put away your pride, and be on your guard; for

if God did not spare the native branches, no more will he spare you" (11:19-21, NEB). The native branches, the Jews, were broken off because of unbelief, and the Gentiles could as easily be removed for the same deficiency.

There is room in the covenant olive tree for every true believer, says Paul; all unbelievers, Jew or Gentile, will be broken off. And all, whether Jew or Gentile, who "abide not still in unbelief," who return to the faith, may again be grafted in on the same basis as the Gentiles are now being accepted. Branches, whether "wild" or "tame" by nature, are accepted if they believe.

Such grafting in of wild branches is "contrary to nature" (Rom. 11:24). This statement is revealing. In nature, the branch which is grafted into a tree retains its original characteristics. The fruit which it bears is not changed by the stock which nourishes it. But this special grafting into the covenant-tree is different. The tree into which these Gentiles are entering must transform them so completely that they lose their natural moral identity and bear the fruit of the covenant, that is, the fruit of righteousness. Otherwise, says Paul, they likewise will be broken off.

"Behold therefore the goodness and severity of God: on them which fell [natural Jews], severity; but toward thee [Gentile believers], goodness, if thou continue in his goodness: otherwise thou also shall be cut off" (Rom. 11:22).

What is to be God's ultimate goal? God is permitting "blindness in part" to happen to Israel, "until the fulness of the Gentiles be come in." And "so all Israel shall be saved: as it is written, There shall come out of Sion the Deliverer, and shall turn away ungodliness from Jacob" (Rom. 11:25-26).

Paul reveals three aspects of God's plan here: 1) that Israel is suffering from partial blindness: only a remnant will be saved; 2) that salvation is being extended to worthy Gentiles; 3) that the final salvation will include "all Israel."

But when Paul speaks of "all Israel" he does not imply that every Jew will be saved. He is thinking rather of a composite body of believing Jews and believing Gentiles who together will constitute God's chosen people "Israel" to be saved (Rom. 2: 28-29). For all Gentiles who have been grafted into the stock of Israel bear the fruit of true Israel and become "Israelites indeed."

When shall this be? It shall be when the Deliverer shall "come out of Sion, . . . and shall turn away ungodliness from Jacob" (11:26). How shall Christ "turn away transgression from Jacob"? He will do it by His purifying judgments, which shall

separate between "him that serveth God and him that serveth him not" (Mal. 3:18). "By the spirit of judgment, and by the spirit of burning" the Lord shall cleanse His land and wash "away the filth of the daughters of Zion" (Isa. 4:4). His judgments will be the purifying process which shall "turn away transgression from Jacob," by removing the transgressors and allowing only the righteous to remain.

Paul confirms this truth with a combination of quotations from Isaiah 59:20, Psalm 14:7, Isaiah 27:9, all of which associate God's favor upon Israel with Israel's rejection of idolatry and her proven faithfulness to God.

In the final issue, says Paul, all of Israel whom God has chosen are God's friends and His decision cannot be changed. "As concerning the gospel, they [the Jews] are enemies for your sakes: but as touching the election, they are beloved for the father's sakes." Or as translated in the NEB: "In the spreading of the Gospel, they are treated as God's enemies for your sake"—the rejection of the Jews had proved to be to the advantage of the Gentiles, as it gave them opportunity to become God's chosen people.

The fact that God made choice of Israel in the beginning cannot be changed; nothing can effect His original decision, so far as God's part is concerned; but this does not say that all will qualify to receive His gift or calling simply because of the favor God showed to the fathers. It means that though Israel may be temporarily set aside, they may return at any time they choose to accept His terms; God's mercy will still accept them, for His overall plan is still in operation, despite their failure. "The gifts and calling of God are without repentance" (11:29).

God's wisdom never mistakes. He never calls evil material good; or good, evil. Where He sees worthwhile material, He calls; thus He never needs to repent of what He has done.

"Just as formerly you were disobedient to God, but now have received mercy in the time of their disobedience, so now, when you receive mercy, they have proved disobedient, but only in order that they too may receive mercy. For in making all mankind prisoners to disobedience, God's purpose was to show mercy to all mankind" (11:30-32, NEB). All is working out according to God's eternal purpose.

Thus Paul exclaims: "O depth of wealth, wisdom, and knowledge in God! How unsearchable his judgments, how untraceable his ways!" (Rom. 11: 33, NEB). ●●

(TO BE CONTINUED NEXT ISSUE)

CHRISTIAN SOLDIERS

The Foe

FOR several months we have been studying the armor that every Christian must wear to be a true soldier of God. We have learned that the girdle of truth, the breastplate of righteousness, the sandals of peace, the shield of faith and the helmet of salvation make up an armor that can withstand every deadly missile that might be hurled. If we will wield the trusty sword of the Spirit while clad in this impenetrable coat of mail, we can fight the foe until he lies dead at our feet and we will have won complete victory.

But do we really know who the foe is that we must fight? Paul said, "Put on the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places" (Eph. 6:11-12). The Christians in Paul's time had a special foe—they were living under a government that strongly opposed their way of life. It was not like contending in battle with man-to-man combat, flesh and blood, but it had power. The civil authorities ruled "the darkness of this world," and it took a lot of courage to stand against them.

Our foe is our old man, our inner selves, ourselves at our worst. Naturally, we do not possess all the high and noble principles God requires of His true soldiers. Instead, we possess the evil traits that Jesus enumerated for us: "For from within, out of the heart of men, proceed the evil thoughts and fornications, thefts, murders, adulteries, deeds of coveting and wickedness, as well as deceit, sensuality, envy, slander, pride and foolishness. All these evil things proceed from within and defile the man" (Mark 7:20-23, New American Standard). In speaking to the Christian brethren in his day, Paul also admonished, "Lie not one to another, seeing that ye have put off the old man with his deeds; and have put on the new man, which is renewed in knowledge after the image of him that created him" (Col. 3:9-10).

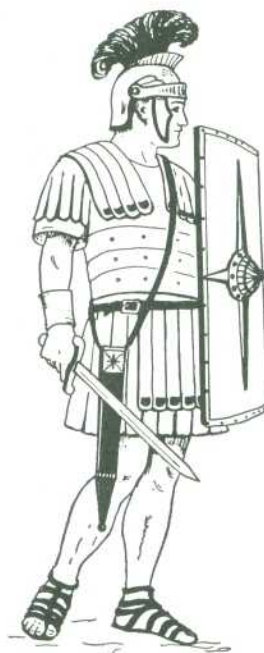
Like all foes, the old man might be said to have a fortress, and remember that the best defensive

strategy is to take the offensive as soon as possible. Let not sin prevail against you, but search it out and smite it quickly. We must also remember the words, "Keep the munition, watch the way, make thy loins strong, fortify thy powers mightily" (Nah. 2:1).

The old man's fortress might be likened to thirteen smaller forts which merge into one principal fort. Each individual part of this fort must be taken before we can claim victory over the whole. This victory is not gained at once; it means steady, continuous fighting. Every act is preceded by the thought, so to do right we must think right. This will not be an easy victory; our old thoughts will return again and again; but as often as they advance, they must be forced to retreat. Reinforcements of divine thoughts must be kept ever ready for a relief skirmish at any time. When these altogether capable and efficient troops, fresh from the armory of God, are always in reserve and are brought forth upon every occasion, the enemy will eventually be defeated and the mind will be renewed in knowledge.

Christian soldiers, be sure your armor is tightly buckled. One poisoned arrow between the joints of your armor could prove fatal. Above all, keep unsheathed the two-edged sword of the Spirit, and whenever the foe lifts his head, strike! It is for your very life.

*So "stick to the fight when you're hardest hit—
It's when things seem worst that you mustn't quit."*



"Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might.

"Put on the whole armour of God...that ye may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand.

"Stand therefore, having your loins girt about with truth, and having on the breastplate of righteousness;

"And your feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace;

"Above all, taking the shield of faith,...and take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God" (Eph. 6:10-17).

Showers of Blessings

The Blessing of Food

CHILDREN, have you ever wondered where our food comes from, especially after eating a nice meal that Mother cooked? Mothers always know how to make food taste so good.

Maybe some of you have watched your Mommy and Daddy plant tiny seeds or put little plants in the ground and in a little while you had nice fresh vegetables to eat—lettuce, tomatoes, carrots and many other good things. Then, of course, there are other things which may not grow in your garden, like fruit—apples, pears, and peaches. This type

of fruit grows on trees and maybe the trees have been growing for a long time, perhaps even longer than you can remember.

I am sure that by now some of you are thinking that maybe God helps these things to grow so we can have them to eat. And you are right. Fruits and vegetables need sunshine and rain to make them grow. Mother and Daddy might put seeds and plants in the garden, but if God did not send the warm sunshine they would never sprout and grow; they would just lie in the ground.

If some of you children live in the city perhaps you do not have a garden. Instead, you go to the market to buy the fruits and vegetables your family eats. If so, a farmer planted the seeds and picked the fruits and vegetables and sent them to market for the grocer to sell. But the farmer needed God's blessings of sunshine and rain so he could grow the food. If the sun did not shine and the rain did not fall, the food would not grow and there would be no food to buy at the market.

So the next time you have a nice salad or a nice juicy peach or apple, remember that if God did not send His blessings to us we would never enjoy the good food we have now. ●●



For mother-love and father-care
For brothers strong and sisters fair,
For love at home and each bright day,
For guidance lest we go astray,
Father in Heav'n, we thank Thee.

For shining mornings with their light,
For rest and shelter of the night,
For health and food, for love and friends,
For ev'rything Thy goodness sends,
Father in Heav'n, we thank Thee.

For flowers that bloom about our feet,
For tender grass, so fresh, so sweet,
For song of bird and hum of bee,
For all things fair we hear or see,
Father in Heav'n, we thank Thee.

For blue of stream and blue of sky,
For pleasant shade of branches high,
For fragrant air and cooling breeze,
For beauty of the blooming trees,
Father in Heav'n, we thank Thee.

— Author Unknown.

To Have and To Hold

"BE not deceived; God is not mocked; for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap."

The most tragic sight in the world is young men and women who do not discover until too late that obedience, discipline, and self-control are the core of character. They begin, as youth so often begins, with unspoiled characters and unsmirched reputations; and, utterly failing to appreciate their opportunity, by lawless living and chance-taking they throw it away. They fail to see that it is far easier to keep character when they have it than to recover it when it is lost.

How tragic indeed when young people, on the threshold of great opportunities, ignore them, to live selfishly and thoughtlessly—out to get all they can, only to lose all that is loveliest and best in life! When you climb the ladder of fame or success, be careful about the things you throw away to go a little faster; you may need those things some day more than any thing else in the world.

In the days of His youth, our Lord Jesus grew in wisdom and stature, and was in favor with God and man. You may grow in physical stature without growing in moral and spiritual stature. Too many of the people who are brought into the police courts are such who in the days of their youth refused to grow up mentally and morally. Instead of facing life eagerly and earnestly, wanting to enrich their minds with good and wholesome things, they befooled themselves by frittering away their time in things that do not profit either mind or spirit. Everyone should remember the words of the Wise Man: "There is a way that seemeth right unto a man, but the end thereof are the ways of death." The death he meant is the most tragic death of all—eternal death. Jesus challenged young and old alike to consider what it would profit them if they were to gain the whole world, and in the getting and grasping lose their own soul.

Much talk about character is taken up with the sins that have been committed, the evil that has been done, and with the pardon and restoration that are waiting for the returning sinner. There ought to be more emphasis on the sins that have never been committed, the impurities that have not yet stained the life, and on the greatness of the opportunity which belongs to a fine youth on that account. Even those instructed in the perfect law

of God must be watchful lest they be influenced by the tendency to laxity. Remember, "For whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap." Wild oats sown will never produce the finest of the wheat. The common idea that a certain amount of folly is educational, that a dissolute life makes a man stronger and wiser after his reformation, comes either from gross ignorance or black-hearted falsehood. Is there anything ennobling about murder? Is one better for having stolen? Does lying add to a man's spiritual reserves? So with the touch of any sin. Association with evil always leaves a stain which can be removed only by prolonged and merciless washing. Recovery from sin is a terrific process.

When the gospel for the penitent sinner has been fully appreciated, it still remains true that recovering lost character and lost reputation involves an appalling struggle. Sin has blinding power, and eyes once perverted by it do not easily regain the grace of seeing straight. Sin has binding power, and the grip of its habits is tremendous. Sin has multiplying power, and each sin spawns other sins like fish in the sea, until it seems impossible to be rid of them all. Sin has hardening power; it callouses the soul until the spiritual touch which once would have roused us leaves us dead. To get out of sin when once in it, is a heart-breaking task.

When, therefore, one sees a youth not yet caught, not yet mastered by evil habit, walking at large, a moral freeman, one wonders if he half appreciates the splendor of his opportunity. So many sermons have been preached on the glory of the sinner's return; so few on the glory of his chance before he went away at all.

The most desirable thing in the world is not the home-coming of a prodigal; the most desirable thing is a youth who keeps his character by obedience to the highest he knows, and never has the bitter struggle of coming back.

Humanity has never outgrown—and never shall outgrow—the necessity of law and discipline. Nor is any single man or woman above this need. Laws and conventions serve a useful purpose, and should be strictly obeyed by every good citizen and true Christian, regardless of personal inconveniences. The fact that certain lawless and vicious persons have made an external success in life does not mean that all society should lapse into moral anarchy. What is success? The painful fact that the very rich and powerful are permitted to steal with impunity does not in the least condone any lawbreaking, however petty. Law is indispensable; discipline is a hard thing, by the observance of which life becomes easier and more secure. Easy

people resent it; wise people embrace it.

"How long halt yet between two opinions?" Why the hesitancy to complete the work of attaining perfect self-control? No object can occupy two places at the same time. It is impossible to reach the summit of the Mountain of God's Holiness by climbing Fool's Hill. Since indeed we are bound to come out of the world, let us not try to carry over any of its ways or habits or pleasures. If the green pastures of the Lord are not sufficient, then go and feed for all time in the parched places of the wilderness. Sinful pleasures are like many unlawful items; one gets the very cheapest quality, pays the highest price, and in the end is destroyed by that for which he lusted.

We may and often do deceive ourselves, but God is not mocked, nor are those who see through His eyes. The tree is known by his fruit. "Whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap. For he that soweth to his flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption; but he that soweth to the spirit shall of the spirit reap life everlasting." ●●

From A Reader

Concerning Patience

The word "wait" is an interesting word to think about. Many times if we would quietly wait or be patient, it would save us much grief and many times, wasted time and effort. The ability to wait is no small virtue, though it consists of small things.

Being patient in little things helps us to meet greater things that come along. It is not always easy to wait patiently when we feel we are approaching some object of great desire—and much less easy when we see it slipping from our reach. But we know that if it is for our good, we will receive it.

Patience makes us humble in prosperity and cheerful in adversity. And it must rule us whether things are going smoothly or whether we are under severe trial. The apostle Peter tells us, "For what glory is it, if when ye be buffeted for your faults, ye shall take it patiently? but if, when ye do well, and suffer for it, ye take it patiently, this is acceptable with God" (1 Pet. 2:20).

Let us then be up and doing
With a heart for any fate:
Still achieving, still pursuing,
Learn to labor and to wait.

Mrs. F. B., Iowa



No Time for Distractions

We cannot even comprehend the limitless time of eternity. This little space of time we are living in now surely seems as nothing in comparison. And we should be aroused to break the bands of sin asunder and work to be found worthy of that grand auspicious Day. The Great Creator holds out to all who will serve Him the promise of eternal security, and that promise will never fail.

For such a hope and reward it would seem we would let nothing in this life distract us from pressing on to gain eternity, where sickness, sorrow and death are forever past.

Selma, Iowa

V. T.

Perilous Times

These are surely very perilous times we are living in, but my heart sings for joy to see them, knowing our loving and wise Heavenly Father has promised to bring us safely through. We must keep straight ahead, turning neither "to the right" or "to the left." We must listen when He says, "Keep my commandments, and live." And when things seem too strong to bear, He has promised a way of escape.

Roseville, California

L. W.

To Reach the Top

I've often thought how our life might be compared with a mountain climber. We must place each foot very carefully. One wrongly placed foot could mean disaster. Slowly, slowly and ever so patiently we climb, trying to reach the top.

We do not know what lies ahead for us, but we must keep on climbing. Our one aim is to reach the top—the grand prize, eternal life.

Ayr, Ontario, Canada

Mrs. R. H.

How To Bear Fruit

We must allow God's truth to stir our very being into action. Only action will produce the fruits of the spirit in our lives, for these fruits are not grown without a great amount of work. There must be a constant pruning, grafting, cultivating and watering if we would bear "much fruit."

Our future life depends on the fruit we bear now. And the Day will soon come when we will be judged by our fruits.

Rome, Georgia

Mrs. S. J.



Meditations

On the Word

THERE is no habit more universal or more pernicious or more stubborn than that of self-justification. It is even more than a habit; it is a veritable part of us, separable only by radical and painful "surgery." For many it has become a way of life. Most of us know, in our sane and thoughtful moments, that we are not what we should be, or even what we could be. But facing that last phrase is uncomfortable; it implies that we have been negligent; therefore we immediately and unconsciously set to work to smother it with excuses, to justify our present status as the best possible in the circumstances. It is so much easier to deceive ourselves than to reform ourselves, and the majority take the easier way.

A noted writer says it well: "When such acceptance [of responsibility] involves self-condemnation, . . . an alibi almost inevitably rushes to the rescue. The fire companies of a city, answering an alarm and converging upon a conflagration to put out the blaze, do not move more swiftly and automatically than do our alibis, hurrying to extinguish any possible accusation. All of us resemble the lawyer in the New Testament story, concerning whom we read: 'But he, desiring to justify himself, said. . .'

" . . . as our language itself suggests, the capacity to make personal *response* involves *responsibility*, and man's desire to escape that, especially if it entails self-blame, is deep-seated and inveterate. A college president says that after long dealing with students, he is unsure whether the degree B. A. stands for Bachelor of Arts or for Builder of Alibis."

In the passage of which our text is the central point, Jesus had been speaking in the presence of

"And he said unto them, Ye are they which justify yourselves before men: but God knoweth your hearts: for that which is highly esteemed among men is abomination in the sight of God"

—Luke 16:15

His bitterest critics and enemies, the Pharisees. While some of His teaching was parabolic, they understood the drift of it all too well. In attacking the vices of avarice and dishonesty, He was getting them "right where they lived." They felt the sting of

His fearless words and writhed under the lash, but it brought no thought of repentance or reformation, only defensive alibis. "Everybody does it." "Business is business." "God is not concerned with such little things."

"And the Pharisees also, who were covetous, heard all these things, and they derided him."

What they said we do not know, and it is not important. It was no doubt as silly and childish as the things which men have said through the ages and still are saying when they try to justify their misconduct.

All of us are tempted to act on emotion or self-interest and then call what we have done by the best name possible. In personal relationships this alibi-habit commonly takes the form of face-saving. One of the deepest impulses in human life is self-defense. Nevertheless its perversions are notorious. We do not wish to be put in the wrong: we passionately desire to protect ourselves from blame; face-saving becomes the primary concern in all cases of personal conflict, and almost automatically we throw the blame on others in order to protect ourselves.

So it was with those ancient Pharisees: acknowledgment of faults was humiliating, reform likely to be troublesome and painful; it was easier to deride and ridicule the blameless Teacher who had spoken to them the wholesome if unpleasant truth.

It is possible to fool all of the people some of the time, and many a man succeeds in fooling himself

all the time, but God cannot be deceived. No matter how smooth or successful our self-justification has been, He knows our hearts. Some day their deepest secrets will be brought to light, and if we are surprised it will be our own fault. Now is the time to investigate ourselves, to look at ourselves with clear eyes, which often means through the eyes of others, and to face the facts manfully. If the facts are unpleasant, as they are likely to be, the sensible thing to do, if we desire life eternal, is to go to work to make them pleasant in truth and not in appearance only.

The latter part of our text could easily be misconstrued by extremists or those who glory in being on the contrary side, regardless. While the gospel is in direct opposition to the spirit of the world at every point, we cannot deny that many of the things which it commands are also held in high esteem by the world, or the decent portion thereof. We are commanded in our relations with the world to "abstain from all appearance of evil." Jesus did not say that *all* which the world esteems is abomination to God, but certain things. Such virtues as honesty, morality, cleanliness, cheerfulness, helpfulness, in their simplest forms, rate high in both scales of values. However, the majority do not approve of carrying even these characteristics to the ultimate, to the point required by the exacting law of the Lord. Some individuality must be retained, some emotion of the flesh preserved as an "outlet," according to human standards. But to stop at their highest level would be an abomination in the sight of God.

There are many things in which the cleavage is sharp and definite. In a materialistic world, perhaps nothing rates higher than material success, whether in the fields of business, politics, education, society, or otherwise. First things are automatically put first, even as water seeks its own level; and the visible evidence of the lives of the vast majority indicates that mammon occupies a higher seat than God.

"Men will praise thee when thou doest well to thyself," said the inspired Psalmist: and in spite of our boasted democracy it is still true that with the masses a man's worth is judged by his financial or social standing. This is abomination to the One who reads the hearts and judges according to character.

To be a citizen of the world, a part of its every activity and a "good fellow" with everybody, is a spirit very highly esteemed by man, whereas the Christian is warned to "come out from among them and be ye separate"; "love not the world, neither the things that are in the world."

The acme of worldly charity is to cover up the faults and transgressions of a friend or relative, seeing and remembering only the good. This is not the mind of God, whose principle is, "He that covereth his sins shall not prosper: but whoso confesseth and forsaketh them shall have mercy" (Prov. 28: 13). Blind loyalty, regardless of character or true worth, while admired by men, is abomination to the Being who commands us to set our affections only on Him.

So the contrasts might be multiplied *ad infinitum*, but it all adds up to the same thing. Jesus made no mistake when He said, "That which is highly esteemed among men is abomination in the sight of God." ••

There is no right without a parallel duty, no liberty without the supremacy of the law, no high destiny without earnest perseverance, no greatness without self-denial.
—Lieber

The only way to live is by filling every moment with fidelity.

Life is a grindstone—whether it grinds you down or polishes you up depends on what you're made of.

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*We have torn out the heart of the mountains
And emptied the veins of the earth.
We have stripped the forests of verdure
And blackened the land of our birth.*

*We have harnessed the floods and the lightning
And swept the rocks from our path.
We have whispered across the waters
And braved the storms in their wrath.*

*We have walked on the floor of the rivers
And followed the birds to the sky;
We have sailed in the depths of the waters
Where long lost galleons lie.*

The Final Conquest

*We have beaten the tasks of the Titans
And wedded the winds to our needs.
We have reared up towers like Babel,
And done the mightiest deeds.*

*We have shortened time and distance
And narrowed the realms of space.
We have everywhere spread dominion
Of the dauntless human race.*

*Yea, mighty are we and drivers
Of all that lives and delves.
We have toiled and fought and mastered—
BUT HAVE YET TO CONQUER OURSELVES!
—Selected.*

