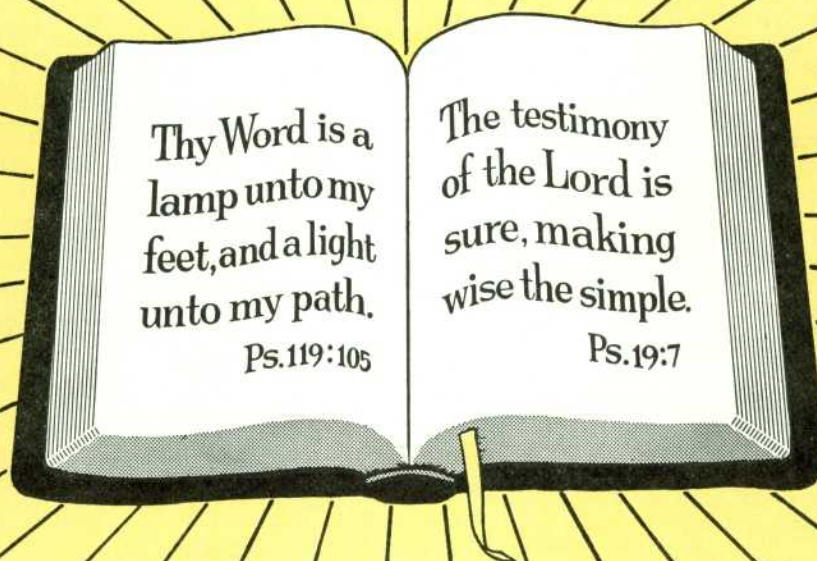


Megiddo Message

DEVOTED TO THE CAUSE OF CHRIST



Let God Be True

Who Shall Live?

To Marry, Or?

Work

Megiddo Message

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Editorially Speaking . . .

Are You Live-with-able?

FEW are the human creatures who can live successfully alone; we need others, and others need us. Yet, unfortunately, few are those who can live long and happily together.

It is to some degree every man's problem. Perhaps the basis is what is technically known as the egocentric predicament. In simple words this means that each person is naturally wrapped up in himself. Each person is a world in himself, with his own interests, his own desires, his own ambitions, his own goals. He sees everything from his own slanted perspective. He thinks of himself as a sun around which the universe revolves.

Now the problem comes when several of these miniature "suns" must shine in the same "universe." It just doesn't work. Little self-centered men quickly find that other little self-centered men are not eager or ready to bow to them. Everyone is *not* live-with-able.

Entering the sphere of Christian influence does not bring an automatic solution. Ego is born in every man; and in a world that is geared to feed that ego, the would-be Christian has an especially difficult task. The desire to think more highly of oneself than he ought to think asserts itself unbidden again and again. It is part of the total person, however, which must be placed upon the altar as a "living sacrifice" (Rom. 12:1) before one may enjoy the bliss of being truly live-with-able.

But alas! How many of us recoil again and again from the point of sacrifice. For that self-centered, self-seeking nature within us does not die easily.

The problem of being live-with-able is two-sided. I must live with others—that is *my* problem. Others must live with me—that is *their* problem. Actually the reverse is true. But only as we learn to see both sides at the same time in a spirit of Christian love and mutual consideration can we even begin to learn the art of being live-with-able.

Life gives ever so many opportunities to practice the delicate art. When different persons live and work together, their tastes, values, loyalties and ideas are bound to differ. And every way of a man being right in his own eyes and wrong in his brother's eyes, there is conflict.

What is the solution? Paul summed it up when he said, "Let your bearing towards one another arise out of your life in Christ Jesus. . . . There must be no room for rivalry and personal vanity among you, but you must humbly reckon others better than yourselves. Look to each other's interest and not merely to your own" (Phil. 2:6, 3-5, NEB).

When we develop such a perspective, we will be able to see in every point of conflict an opportunity to conquer our self-centered nature. We will become live-with-able in the fullest sense of the word because our new, outgoing nature will find a common center with others in the larger, expanded thinking of God. ●●

Let God Be True

We live in a hyper-permissive society. The moral and spiritual foundations of our civilization have been shaken until one wonders if anything is secure. Suicide and crime are increasing steadily. Serious-minded persons are disillusioned.

One of the main reasons for this is the attitude which many people—and even so-called ministers of the Gospel—hold toward God and His Word. Rejecting God as the Creator of the universe and the Bible as His revealed Word, they have nothing left on which to build hope or happiness or life. They are like the Beatles, who had a song like this about Christ:

*He's a real nowhere man
living in a nowhere land
making lots of nowhere plans
with nobody ...*

This is pretty much the pervasive thinking of the secular world. They are afloat—not only morally, but spiritually. There's no motivation, no real enthusiasm for living, because they feel no real direction, purpose or meaning to life.

But thanks be to God! He has given us something that we can hold on to. It is the Bible, proven valid and authentic in its every truth and teaching. Archeological discoveries have confirmed it; secular history has had to give way to it time after time, as the Bible has been proven right.

The Bible is more than defensive against would-be attackers—it takes the offense and attacks, challenging the very foundations of sin and evil. It tells of the day, not far distant, when "violence shall no more be heard in thy land" and "thou shalt not see evil any more."

Attacks made upon the Bible are beyond numbering, but the Bible still stands, the unalterable Word of God.

The following are more questions raised by our correspondent, the first portion of which appeared in our issue last month. Questions are printed in boldface type; an answer follows each question, in lightface.

The Bible Inspired?

"How is it that great moral reforms came about only with the rise of skepticism and humanism during the last 150 years? Slavery and serfdom, tor-

ture, and many other social evils prevailed during the religious age, and the church did nothing to eliminate them. Only with the rise of skepticism were they eliminated. Doesn't this inventory of horror show that the Christian religion is not inspired?"

"How could a holy book and a religion that are supposed to be divinely inspired have caused so much bloodshed, killing, war, torture, and murder? If the Christian religion is inspired, then the men who follow it should be divinely inspired not to do those things."

The inspiration of the Bible and the inspiration of a particular church are two different subjects. The established church during the Medieval period to which you refer, presumably the Roman Catholic, was not a church founded wholly on Bible principle, upholding the original complete and pure doctrine of Christ. The Medieval Church was developed over a long period of time as men combined the teachings of Christ with Greek philosophy; it was the outgrowth of numerous councils and debates until the system of religion that emerged was scarcely related to the simple Galilean who was acclaimed to be its founder. And during the Medieval period, when there was general darkness and ignorance and superstition throughout the European world, the church upheld many un-Christian practices, such as those you mention. Though it is known as the religious age (for lack of strong civil government and reasonable secular thinking), it was not an age marked by widespread proclamation of Jesus' words. It was Christendom, but only in name. Its general and basic teachings were not those of the Bible. Only when men once again thought for themselves and questioned the superstitions taught by the established church could the social and religious condition of the world improve. This time is what you refer to as the "rise of skepticism," as people became more skeptical of the established religion. But what they were rising up against was not the inspired Scriptures but the wholly uninspired teachings of the church at that time.

However, evil done in the name of religion does not alter the basics of the religion itself. Because

the original text of the Bible was inspired does *not* mean that all who read or quote or use that text, for whatever purpose they may connive, are also inspired.

All Scripture Inspired?

"The Bible says in Second Timothy 3:16, 'All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness.' I cannot believe this is true."

It is very obvious that, on sober reflection, *all* the Bible is *not* given by God's inspiration. Some of the Bible is simply historical. For example, the story of Nehemiah's rebuilding of the wall around Jerusalem. It was a contemporary happening, and Nehemiah reported it as such. No inspiration was required to write such an account. And there are hundreds of such passages in the Bible.

But there are other passages in the Bible which could only have been given by divine inspiration: such as Jesus' foretelling how He would die and be raised to life again (see Mark 9:31; Matt. 17:23; 21:38-39); or the Holy Spirit power which would be poured out upon the apostles (Luke 24:49; Acts 1:8). Jeremiah the prophet foresaw vividly the coming captivity of Judah, even specifying its duration (Jer. 29: 4-10, 28); without divine inspiration this would have been impossible.

What about the words of Paul in II Timothy 3:16? The fault lies not with the original writing but with the translation. The text may as correctly be rendered: "All Scripture given by inspiration of God is profitable," etc. Several of the newer versions read this way, as does the original Greek.

God Is Just?

"In the book of Numbers, chapter 31, verses 17 and 18, we read Moses' command to the Israelites and how they should deal with the Midianite people. Israel was at that time invading the land of the Midianites. But why? The Bible does not say what the Midianites had done to the Hebrews to cause them to invade the Midianites. I believe they had done nothing amiss, because the Hebrews were a war-like people, greedy and cruel."

"If God is supposed to be a God of love, how could He instruct Moses' army to do such a thing?"

Your statement that the Midianites had done nothing to the Israelites is not factual. Read Numbers 25, and you will see that the Midianites had seduced the Israelites into worshiping their pagan gods. In addition to this, there was illicit inter-

course taking place between the women of the Midianites and the men of Israel, a practice which God abhorred. This brought a plague upon Israel, in punishment for their sin. The Lord ordered the destruction of these women who had had illicit intercourse in violation of God's laws. How else could the evil be stopped?

If evil practices today were dealt with in a similar manner, we would see a sharp reduction of crime and immorality in our nation. God was just; He knew who deserved the punishment and who did not, and by removing the offenders He made the country safe for those who would be obedient.

God is a God of love, but His love is not a blind sentimental feeling. There is such a thing as divine judgment upon evildoers, and this is one aspect of His love for those who serve and worship Him—how else could He protect His own?

God never takes the lives of those who deserve to live. In His infinite wisdom He knows. This is where God's taking of human life and man's taking of life in war differ. Man does not possess the ability to judge a person's character sufficiently to know whether he should take a life or not, therefore the command, "Thou shalt not kill." God possesses the foreknowledge to determine who is worthy of being spared and who should be eliminated. And when He deems it necessary to take life, it is not our place to object.

God Is All-Powerful?

"The Bible says in Jeremiah 32:27, 17: 'Behold, I am the Lord, the God of all flesh: is there any thing too hard for me? . . . there is nothing too hard for thee.' Why then should God have had trouble with the warriors who had chariots of iron? (Judges 1:19)."

The text in Judges 1:19 does not actually say that God was not able to defeat the men who had chariots of iron. It says that Judah could not drive them out. And the reason was as usual: The Lord was not with them, and they were not with Him. The "he" in the verse is Judah, and the people of Judah, not the Lord. Other versions of the Bible make this clear: "They could not drive out the inhabitants of the vale," etc. (see Judges 1:19, NEB, Jerusalem Bible, NASB).

The Douay Bible calls Judah a "coward" in this verse, which would explain their inadequacy. Through a cowardly fear of their enemies' chariots, and for want of confidence in God, *they* failed—not God. Of course, God could have made them victorious—and He would have—if He had wanted to, and if they had been putting their trust in Him.

But you are making a contradiction where none exists.

"Romans 15:33 calls God the 'God of peace' while Exodus 15:3 says 'The Lord is a man of war.' How can you say there is no contradiction here?"

How can God have unmarred peace on earth so long as jealous, greedy men are allowed to live?

In the story in Exodus, Pharaoh had pursued Israel and would have destroyed them, had not God intervened in Israel's behalf. God overcame Pharaoh's power to save the peace of Israel. The Moffatt Bible renders it, "The Eternal knows well how to fight—flinging the Pharaoh's chariots and his army into the sea." God is not fighting for territory or monetary gain, for the earth and everything in it is His. He is a God of peace; but when bandits try to disturb His peace, He has the right to protect it by subduing their offensive. God used war to rescue His people on many occasions.

"There is a plurality of Gods, according to Genesis 1:26, 'And God said, Let us make man in our image.' But 'there is none other God but one' in I Corinthians 8:4."

In Genesis 1:26, God is addressing the *elohim*, a term used not only for the Deity Himself but for other members of His divine family who bear His name (Ex. 23:21). There is only one Supreme God, but we have no reason to believe that He lives and works eternally alone. The *elohim* are His angels, beings whom He has glorified and who share in His celestial activities.

"The Bible commands killing, and then it contradicts itself and forbids it. Part of the Ten Commandments Law was, 'Thou shalt not kill,' yet the Lord told Jehu to kill 'all that remained of the house of Ahab,' even commending Jehu for his obedience (see II Kings 10:11, 30)."

There is a great difference between one individual killing another, perhaps in revenge or selfish greed, and killing under divine jurisdiction. God knows the end from the beginning, and He does not mistake good and evil. Hence He kills, He allows killing and sometimes even commands it. But it is all part of the fulfilling of His eternal purpose. To take the law into one's own hands has never been allowed by God or by any civilized government.

God the Author of Evil?

"The Bible says that 'the law of the Lord is perfect' (Ps. 19:7), and that 'God is not the author of confusion' (I Cor. 14:33). He is supposed to be a

'God of truth and without iniquity, just and right' (Deut. 32:4).

"Why then does the Bible also say, 'Out of the mouth of the most High proceedeth not evil and good?' (Lam. 3:38); and 'Thus saith the Lord, Behold, I frame evil against you, and devise a device against you' (Jer. 18:11); again, 'I make peace, and create evil' (Isa. 45:7); again, 'Shall there be evil in a city, and the Lord hath not done it?' (Amos 3:6). Also, why did the Lord give people 'statutes that were not good, and judgments whereby they should not live' (Ezek. 20:25) if He is so righteous?"

The Bible uses the word "evil" with more than one meaning, just as many words in our language today have different meanings. The original word rendered "evil" in our Common Version has among its meanings "bad, evil; adversity, affliction, calamity, distress, displeasure, grief or harm, misery, sorrow, trouble, wicked, wrong." It is derived from *raw-ah*, the Hebrew word meaning "to spoil, to make good for nothing; to entreat; to do harm, hurt, ill, punish."

God places before men "life and good" and "death and evil." There is a solemn responsibility. Man can do wrong if he chooses, but God reserves the right to punish by sending "evil" upon him for his disobedience.

This may well be the thought of Lamentations 3:38, that the Lord is the source of both blessing and adversity, according to Israel's deserts. The Hebrew people, in contrast to the idolatrous nations around them, recognized God as the one source of all things. When they were faithful, they prospered; they disobeyed, only to suffer the consequences. The Moffatt translation of this verse carries this thought: "Are not weal and woe alike decreed by the Most High? Then why should mortal men complain when they are punished for their sins?" The "evil" was merely an enforcement of His law, punishment for violation of His orders.

This same enforcement of His law is the "evil" which the Lord was framing against the people of Judah, as recorded in Jeremiah 18:11. And accompanying the threat of judgment is the means by which it may be averted. "Return ye now every one from his evil way, and make your ways and your doings good" (Jer. 18:11). God was always ready to bless them, when they would return to following Him.

You quote Isaiah 45:7, which reads: "I make peace, and create evil," as though God would engage in so contradictory a business. But no, there is a second definition of "create" which amply explains

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When God Doeth This...

GREAT and earth-shaking events are just ahead. God is ready to do a work, a great work and a mighty. "For I will work in your days, a work which ye shall in no wise believe, though a man declare it unto you" (Acts 13:41).

God has a plan, and that plan is steadily drawing near the day when it shall be completed. "The night is far spent, the day is at hand."

What is at hand?

The Arrival of Elijah, Herald of the King

"Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the Lord... lest I come and smite the earth with a curse" (Mal. 4:5-6).

The Resurrection of the Dead in Christ

"The dead in Christ shall rise" (I Thess. 4:16).

"Thy dead men shall live, together with my dead body shall they arise... For the earth shall cast out the dead" (Isa. 26:19).

The Arrival of the King

"For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first: then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air" (I Thess. 4:16-17).

The Judgment of God's Servants

"The Lord Jesus Christ... shall judge the quick [living] and the dead at his appearing and his kingdom" (II Tim. 4:1).

"For the Son of man shall come in the glory of his Father with his angels; and then he shall reward every man according to his works" (Matt. 16:27).

Conquest of the Nations of Earth, Armageddon

"And I saw the beast, and the kings of the earth, and their armies, gathered together to make war against him that sat on the horse, and against his army... These shall make war with the Lamb, and the Lamb shall overcome them: for he is Lord of lords, and King of kings: and they that are with him are called, and chosen, and faithful" (Rev. 19:15-17).

Conversion of the Nations

"When thy judgments are in the earth, the inhabitants of the world will learn righteousness" (Isa. 26:9).

"Yea, many people and strong nations shall come to seek the Lord of hosts in Jerusalem, and to pray before the Lord" (Zech. 8:22).

Millennial Reign of Christ and the Saints

"And the kingdom, and dominion, and the greatness of the kingdom under the whole heaven, shall be given to the people of the saints of the most High, whose kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, and all dominions shall serve and obey him" (Dan. 7:27).

"And I saw thrones, and they sat upon them, and judgment was given unto them: and I saw the souls of them that were beheaded for the witness of Jesus, and for the word of God; and they lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years" (Rev. 20:4).

Second Resurrection and Judgment

"The rest of the dead lived not again until the thousand years were finished" (Rev. 20:5).

"When the thousand years are expired, Satan [sin and sinners] shall be loosed out of his prison, and shall go out to deceive the nations" (Rev. 20:7-8).

"And I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God; and the books were opened: and another book was opened, which is the book of life: and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works. And whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire [destruction]" (Rev. 20:12, 15).

The Dawn of Eternity

"God himself shall be with them, and be their God. And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away.

"And he that sat upon the throne said, Behold, I make all things new. And he said unto me, Write: for these words are true and faithful" (Rev. 21:3-5).

WHO SHALL LIVE?

A Message by our former pastor, Percy J. Thatcher

"ALAS, who shall live when God doeth this?" A more heart-searching question cannot be found within the pages of Holy Writ. It reaches down to the time when God's judgments have passed and the tares, chaff, and stubble are swept away. It is the season when He shall come down like rain upon the new mown grass; the day when the righteous shall flourish and peace shall bathe the world from pole to pole. "His dominion shall extend from sea to sea."

Ah! but who shall "abide the day of his coming? . . . who shall stand when he appeareth?" "Who shall live when God doeth this!"

Do we fully grasp the sacred obligations that have devolved upon us, we who are privileged to live so near to the coming of the Son of Man, when He shall triumph in His glory? This generation that has seen the fig tree shooting forth her leaves and bearing fruit; this generation that has seen Rome confounded in all her errors; that has been called to a sanctified fast and gathered to a solemn assembly; that has heard the trumpet blown in Zion to awake, to arouse, to prepare for that great and notable day when God shall arise to shake terribly the kingdoms of men?

When the mariner has been tossed for many days in thick weather on an unknown sea, he naturally avails himself of the first pause in the storm, the earliest glance at the sun, to take his latitude and ascertain how far the elements have driven him from his true course. Let us imitate this prudence and before we float further ask ourselves the question, "Where am I now? Am I near the rocks, or is my storm-tossed bark drifting far from the channel, away from the blessed lights of home?"

If thou wouldst live, O Christian, in the day when mercy and truth meet together, then hasten and prepare to meet thy God. If thou wouldst live, "let thine eyelids look straight before thee. Ponder well the path of thy feet, and let all thy ways be established. Turn not to the right hand nor to the left; remove thy foot from evil."

Hearken, O daughter of Zion, and consider. Have
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you the same vehement desire that you formerly had to go on to perfection? Is the giddy, rushing world around you, by its indifference and unbelief, causing you to slacken your pace, destroying your hunger and thirst for righteousness? Is your relish for the heavenly food changing? Do you crave the flesh more than the manna which is falling all around you? Have you every day and hour an uninterrupted sense of "Christ in you the hope of glory?" Do you sit in "heavenly places"?

You once pushed on through rain or cold to take up your cross. You went about doing good, trying to find those who were not able to find you. Hast thou become lukewarm? "I would," says God, "that thou wert cold or hot."

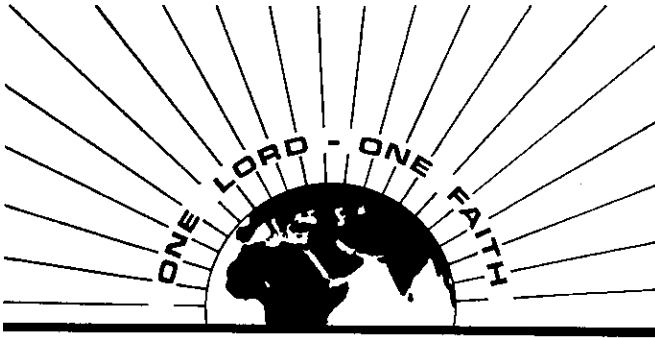
If you would live, then forget not the path your Master trod. Turn not aside to any forbidden way. Do you think it has been said in vain, If we die with Christ, we shall also live with him? Our triumph is prepared, and yet we often do all we can to shun the combat. Is it because we are fearful of a giant of sin, or is there a lion in our way? If we would live, let us ask ourselves today, Are we dealing squarely with God? Are we afraid to work a little overtime in His service to catch up with much we have lost by serving self?

A Christian's life calls for sacrifice. Too often we have sought that sacrifice that is not unpleasant. If we examine ourselves, perhaps we shall find that oftentimes we have wanted happiness for self regardless of others. Oh, this clamorous self-regard seems desperately at war with self-sacrifice. Too many things we *call* sacrifice are but privileges granted us. So it is written of the Master: "for the joy that was set before him he endured," taking up His cross.

Too often we have watched the weeds growing in another's garden so long that we have forgotten to cultivate our own.

If we would live, we will be careful in our everyday travels to take all the detours around sin and not run into it. Even by exercising the most scrupulous care to avoid temptation, we shall have trials enough.

(Continued on page 12)



Christ Had Enemies

If you have heard anything about Christianity, you have heard about Christ, its center and all-important Prophet. Here is a little more about Him and a sad remembrance of the people He tried to help. Theirs could have been so rich an experience. They had contact with the Christ we long to meet. But the majority rejected Him. This has happened repeatedly through the ages. The greatest men—especially God's great men—are not the most popular.

As you learn about Christ, read what the Bible has to say of Him. Even if you are already familiar with it, you will find something new in going over it again. His life and activities, His struggles and victories are always a fresh inspiration to us. Think about them and try to see how you can become more like Him. Remember, He is the perfect example of what we can—and must—become.

JESUS came quietly among men, the Son of God, the Light of the world, the long-promised Messiah. His childhood was probably much like that of any other Jewish lad of His day, yet Jesus was different: He was a child with a destiny.

When He was about thirty years old, He went out to preach and minister among the people. Crowds thronged to hear Him. His teaching was direct and forceful. "He taught them as one having authority"—which indeed He *did* have, being the Son of God.

Jesus' teaching cut across accepted lines of belief and hypocritical practice which had become dominant among the Jews. Straight to the heart His message went. "Seek ye first the kingdom of God and his righteousness." "Enter ye in at the strait gate." "Watch and pray, that ye enter not into temptation." "Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites!"

Jesus was able to add even greater authority to His words because God had entrusted Him with a special superhuman power. By this power Jesus could perform miracles and heal sickness. This was something many men in Jesus' day *claimed* to be able to do, but which none could actually do, not having power from God.

Jesus' supernatural power gave proof positive to onlookers that this was indeed the Son of God, and that His message was true.

Jesus' miracles and manifestations of divine power were recorded to convince us. We read how He healed sick bodies and sick minds. He restored sight to eyes that had been blind for years. He showed His superior power over the forces of nature by walking on the water and calming the storm, and by multiplying a few loaves and fishes to feed thousands. He even restored to life a few persons who had died. All this was done to prove that Jesus was who He claimed to be, and that God had sent Him to deliver His message to men.

Naturally His "mighty works" received wide public acclaim. People extolled Him, especially for His deeds of mercy and His power over disease.

But everyone did not praise. Jealous Jews could not bear to see crowds following Him and neglecting them. They saw in Jesus a character superior to their own; those who held positions of authority heard in His promises of a coming kingdom a threat to the security of their stations.

From the earliest days of His preaching, Jesus was at odds with the Jews—and for good reason. The Jews emphasized obedience to the letter of the ancient Law of Moses, which they kept with all pomp and show, without concern for its intent or principle. Jesus stressed not an outward observance but an inward transformation, saying that mere outward religion was vain.

Actually Jesus lived in a part of the Roman Empire. The Empire was divided into provinces and each province had its local ruler who was responsible to Rome. Jerusalem, where Jesus was arrested, was in the province of Judea, and Judea was under Pontius Pilate. In Judea the Jews were permitted to have their own governing council, which was known as the Sanhedrin. This body held general control over the internal affairs of the country—civil, as well as religious. The highest office in the Sanhedrin was that of high priest, which during the days of Christ was no more than a political office. At the time of Christ, Caiaphas was the high priest.

Even early in His ministry Jesus faced serious opposition from Jews. Angered by His tolerance for people of other nationalities, they "thrust him

out of the city" (Luke 4:15-30). On another occasion they tried to kill Him because, contrary to their law, He healed a man on the sabbath (John 5:6-16). Still seeking a cause against Him, they falsely accused Him of claiming to be equal with God (John 5:18).

But God had sent Jesus to accomplish a specific work. And God watched over Him and protected Him from harm until that work was done. Several times Jesus escaped out of the hands of the Jews. But they were not to be dissuaded from their evil intent, though they were somewhat cautious, fearing what the people might think or do.

But at last the hour came when Jesus was betrayed into their hands—by one of His own chosen men who proved unfaithful to Him, a man named Judas.

The Last Supper

Each year the Jewish people observed what was known as Passover. It was a feast which commemorated the night God delivered them from Egyptian bondage many centuries before. Jesus, being a Jew, was accustomed to observing this same feast as Moses, their ancient leader, had instituted it by God's command. But at this time Jesus knew what lay ahead of Him; God had revealed to Him that He must suffer, and for this reason Jesus observed the Passover with His disciples one day early. We read of this in John 13:1-2: "Now before the feast of the passover when Jesus knew that his hour was come, . . . and supper being ended. . . ." It was before the regular Passover of the Jews.

Jesus partook of the Passover with His disciples, the betrayer Judas attending with the others. But Judas left early to be about his evil mission; and as soon as he was gone, Jesus began to address His disciples with words of unexcelled breadth and depth. This farewell message is recorded in the Gospel of John, chapters 14, 15, and 16. In it He showed the strength of character He had mastered during His thirty-three years of life. He had no fear of His approaching death. He spoke of peace and love; of joy and faithfulness. He told them how to be His friends. "I am the vine," He said. "You are the branches." The address is filled with deep spiritual truths and lessons which come down to inspire and admonish us today. Jesus was looking ahead—not to His death, but beyond, to the time when He would be taken to meet His Father and would be glorified in His presence.

After the discourse, Jesus and His disciples sang a hymn and went out into the Mount of Olives, to a garden called Gethsemane. It was here that Jesus felt the full force of what was about to happen.

He prayed earnestly to His Father, saying, "Father, if thou be willing, remove this cup from me: nevertheless not my will, but thine, be done" (Luke 22:44). The battle was won; by submitting to physical death, He had given the last full measure of obedience to His Father's will.

While Jesus was still speaking, Judas drew near to betray Him with a kiss. Immediately a group of soldiers arrested Him, and Jesus was "in the hands of sinful men."

He was brought first to the Jewish council, to be tried. The entire trial was unjust, because the leaders of the council had already decided that Jesus should die. The trial was more for the purpose of finding some justification for what they wanted to do, some evidence which they might use to convince the Roman governor Pilate that Jesus was worthy of the death penalty. For the Roman governor Pilate had to give his official consent.

From the council Jesus was led to Pilate, where He was accused (falsely), in these words: "We found this fellow perverting the nation, and forbidding to give tribute to Caesar, saying that he himself is Christ a King" (Luke 23:2). Pilate soon learned that Jesus was from another province, called Galilee, over which Herod ruled. In an effort to escape the decision, Pilate sent Jesus to Herod. Herod was glad to see Jesus, but returned Him to Pilate. Pilate attempted to wash his hands in innocence of "the blood of this just person."

But the Jews would not be satisfied. They clamored and cried and rioted. "Crucify Him!" they shouted. And Pilate, anxious to quiet the tumult for fear of losing his own position, consented and signed Jesus' death warrant. So Jesus was led outside Jerusalem to Golgotha, where He was crucified.

All these events—the Passover Supper, the arrest, the trial, and the crucifixion—all took place before the end of the thirteenth day of the first month of the Jewish year (the day began in the evening at sundown). And before sundown, Jesus was resting in the tomb, silent in death.

The following day was the Jewish sabbath, and the Jews rested. The Romans did one thing: they placed a huge rock in front of the tomb entrance to seal it securely, and they placed a Roman guard at the entrance.

Early the next morning "certain women" were early at the tomb—they had come to anoint Jesus' body—and they found the tomb empty! Jesus had risen! He was alive!

Why Did Jesus Die?

Why did He have to suffer crucifixion? Why did
(Continued on page 22)

To Marry, Or . . . ?

LIFE is a series of choices. The young child must choose his toy or his playmate, his book or his diversion. When he is told what he should do, he must choose whether he will obey, or disobey and risk the consequences. As he grows older, his choices become more significant. He must choose his interests, his friends, his vocation, his life-style. And often the entire course of his life is determined by these initial choices.

One major choice facing young persons is that of a life companion. Generally a youth scarcely gives serious thought to whether or not he should marry. Popular thinking assumes that normal people will marry. Why should any normal person *choose* to remain single? Everyone knows that "normal, well-adjusted people get married."

Our marriage-oriented society is the result of generations of equating "marriage" with "happiness." Marriage is glorified as the means to the "and-they-lived-happily-ever-after" type of life. Incompatibility, periods of unhappiness, arguments, and perhaps unfaithfulness on the part of one partner or both are rarely thought of. Magazines and books and movies and songs all proclaim the universal idea that "You're nobody till somebody loves you." Seldom does anyone ask, "Will you marry?" It is assumed that eventually you will—unless you are an abnormal introvert, or selfish recluse, or an eccentric egomaniac; or unless some unfortunate circumstances intervene. Everyone will marry unless forced to remain single.

The association of marriage with normalcy is so dominant that celibacy is often thought of as a state to be dreaded. The unmarried wear a brand of rejection. They are failures. "Celibacy"—even the word sounds strange and old-fashioned, harking back to the medieval days when nuns and monks lived in total isolation rather than expose themselves to the supposed evil influence of the opposite sex. Thus the celibate is stigmatized by identity with the regressive, when the real offender is the pressure-packed environment that overemphasizes marriage.

Is it possible that a normal, progressive, well-adjusted person may *choose* to remain single?

The answer is yes. A person need not remain single only because he is forced to by circumstances

beyond his control. Actually, marriage is only one of two alternatives. Some people consider a third—the modern "living together" without commitment; but such a life-style is far below the Christian's standard of morality. It creates an immoral situation which even respectable persons of society condemn. "Free love" has absolutely no place in the life of any professing Christian.

Because a man or woman remains single does not mean that he or she is not interested in a fulfilling and meaningful life, or that he or she is socially undesirable. The choice between marriage and celibacy belongs to everyone individually, and there are many reasons—both secular and religious—why a person may sanely *choose* celibacy as his personal life-style.

A pre-occupation with love dominates the thinking of young people the world over. The obsession to attract, to date, to win the "right" mate strikes even the grade-school child. Teen-agers are involved fully. All emphasis is on finding and attracting. And adolescents soon learn that the important consideration is not how truthful or how kind or how dependable he or she may be but how attractive to potential partners. Some recognize the prodigious waste not only of money but also of time and energy and vision, and they resolve to avoid it; but these must be rugged individualists, for the majority are carried away.

The obsession with love and marriage pushes many young people into marriage who are not mentally or physically ready or able to assume its responsibilities and privileges, or who would prefer to give their lives to a career. They may lack the financial resources to sustain a home. Or they may lack the mental maturity to meet the pressures of maintaining their own home and family. They may not have developed the stability to see them through the difficulties which are part of living together. Or other interests may claim priority in their lives. Any of these factors may lead to an unhappy marriage, and divorce statistics testify to the fact that too many are unwilling to see it through.

Marriage is not the key to immediate happiness and automatic fulfillment as it is often thought to be. It does not instantly change one's personality

into a compatible partner. Character is a matter of time and growth, whether inside or outside a marriage contract.

Again from a secular viewpoint, unhappy marriages result in lost potential. So many people waste time and energy trying to adopt a false value system; they waste the time and energy they should apply to becoming the type of persons the world needs (kind, responsible, honest), the type of people who contribute most to the well-being of others.

The aspiring Christian has still other—and more compelling—reasons why he may rightly and reasonably *choose* to remain single, if he is not already bound. The apostle Paul discusses this alternative as it involves the Christian in First Corinthians 7. In times of crisis he considers celibacy not only as good as but better than marriage (see vs. 8, 37-38, 40). And he tells why.

One of Paul's first reasons is that marriage is more difficult during "the present distress" (I Cor. 7:26). Paul lived in a time of lawlessness, immorality and sin. And might not our own day and age be comparable, when the "perilous times" he predicted are so present?

Paul also recognizes that celibacy often helps the Christian live the sort of life he ought to live—a life of undistracted devotion to God. It is for one's own benefit that Paul encourages celibacy. A person has to think about conforming to certain earthly standards if another person is directly dependent upon him. This puts a limitation on one's freedom of action, thought and purpose. Thus though marriage tends to eliminate some temptations (vs. 1-9), it creates other temptations and distractions.

Paul writes: "He that is unmarried careth for the things that belong to the Lord, how he may please the Lord: but he that is married careth for the things of the world, how he may please his wife. There is difference also between a wife and a virgin. The unmarried woman careth for the things of the Lord, that she may be holy both in body and in spirit: but she that is married careth for the things of the world, how she may please her husband. And I speak this for your own profit; not that I may cast a snare upon you, but for that which is comely, and that ye may attend upon the Lord without distraction" (I Cor. 7:32-35).

Paul's view of celibacy should not be confused with monasticism. Paul is not recommending that the Christian withdraw from all association with others and live a life of seclusion. On the contrary, one of Paul's reasons for advocating celibacy is that the single person has fewer confining responsibilities. He is freer to give himself to the work

of the church and to minister to those who need his help. He is freer to involve himself more fully in the work of the Lord. First Corinthians 7 is not a call to seclusion; rather, it is a challenge to intensified involvement in the Lord's work.

Paul recognizes also a superior moral quality possessed by those who choose to remain single: willpower and self-control. There is virtue in being able to command one's actions and emotions according to a fixed and overall purpose; in fact, this is the primary concern of every aspiring Christian, whether married or single. Says Paul, "... he that standeth stedfast in his heart... [and] hath power over his own will, and hath so decreed in his heart that he will keep his virgin, doeth well" (v. 37). Self-control is the core of all Christian virtue. "So then he that giveth her in marriage doeth well; but he that giveth her not in marriage doeth better" (v. 38).

Throughout Paul's Epistles, one message is paramount: the Christian must have *one* overruling concern; his entire personal life must be focused in *one* direction. Such was Paul's own life as he concentrated all his thought and energy and power on attaining the reward God had offered him. Said he, "This one thing I do, ... I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus" (Phil. 3:13-14). He recognized continually the danger of any secondary interest assuming a too prior claim upon his time and mind and interest. Thus he recommended the most directly concentrated course of life available. Attaining the goal was his first concern; all else was secondary.

Paul wrote also—and from his own desperate experience—of the difficulty involved in his own day-to-day progress toward that goal. When one sets before him the life of Christ as an example to be imitated in its every moral detail, he assumes a task of immense proportions, a task which involves the total reconstructing of his whole life. Every interest, every desire, every action, emotion, thought and feeling must be examined and reconstructed, as need be, to fit the perfect pattern set before him. The struggle is intense, as Paul wrote of his own: "The good that I would I do not: but the evil which I would not, that I do. ... I find then a law, that, when I would do good, evil is present with me. For I delight in the law of God after the inward man: but I see another law in my members, warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin which is in my members" (Rom. 7:19, 21-23).

Paul's personal experience in the Christian conflict being what it was, we can easily see why he

advised against any life-style which might further complicate the task. For this reason he wrote to the Corinthians, recommending that "it is best for a man to be as he is," especially in a "time of stress like the present." He wrote, "Are you bound in marriage? Do not seek a dissolution. Has your marriage been dissolved? Do not seek a wife. . . . What I mean, my friends, is this. The time we live in will not last long. . . . for the whole frame of this world is passing away" (I Cor. 7:26-29, 31, NEB). Paul lived in a time of stress, and so do we; hence the timeliness of his advice for us today.

The man or woman who seeks first the kingdom of God and His righteousness finds the popular "love and marriage" propaganda of the present day far removed from the center of his interests. As a dedicated Christian, his one absorbing thought is to attain the "measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ," and the gratifying of any fleshly desire only hinders this effort. It is written that

"even Christ pleased not himself" (Rom. 15:3).

To decide to remain unmarried if that is one's state when called into the way of Christ is not to be forced into an unattractive life-style, but to choose the style of life which offers the greatest advantage and the least distraction in his commitment to the work of the Lord.

Celibacy is not a life-style for those who are abnormal and incompatible; it is not a monastic commitment to isolation. Rather, it is the grateful choice of those who wish above all else to be free to give themselves, their time and their strength wholeheartedly to the work of the Lord. It is what Paul called the "better" alternative for those who may choose. "He who marries his partner does well, and he who does not will do better" (I Cor. 7:38, NEB). Paul places his emphasis on the "better" for those who have dedicated their lives to attaining the "high calling of God in Christ Jesus." ●

WHO SHALL LIVE?

(Continued from page 7)

A Christian's life means transformation, a cleaning up. We are never called of God if we are ashamed to scour and scrub. We have heard men say that Sunday worship was church service. Church service begins early Monday morning and lasts all week; Sunday's worship is preparation for it, but the Christian service our Master illustrated and approved is the sacrificial conflict amid the dust and din of daily life.

We must not only strike blows for righteousness; we must receive them as well. Too often we have closed our eyes against the light and truth when they have revealed our own spiritual imperfections. Instead, we have listened to the voice calling us down to the beast level. "Turn you at my reproof," says God, for why, O "why will ye die, O house of Israel?"

Much of our sacrifice for God and man has lost its sweetness because we have blown a trumpet in the street announcing our coming. It has been truly said that the happiest sensation in the world is to do good—to do a good deed in secret and to have it found out by accident.

Perhaps a good question to ask ourselves, if we would live, is not, Where do I stand? but, In what direction am I traveling?

If we would live, we must watch the *little* things. Lest we go down to "sleep the sleep of death," we will ever be on the watch for the *little* sins. Re-

member, it was the "little foxes" that destroyed the vines. A "little fire kindleth" a great matter; a "little leaven leaveneth the whole lump."

On the slope of Long's Peak in Colorado lie the ruins of a great forest giant. The naturalist tells us the tree had stood 400 years, that it was a seedling when Columbus landed on San Salvador; that it had been struck by lightning fourteen times; that the avalanches and storms of four centuries had thundered past it. In the end, however, beetles killed it. The giant that age had not withered nor lightnings blasted nor storms subdued, fell at last before insects that a man could crush with his fingers. So character collapses and falls, not because of some great and presumptuous sin, but more frequently by small enemies that too often we overlook till they have accomplished their deadly work.

Are we disposed to be among that number who having eyes, see not; who having ears, hear not? God forbid. But let us be warned by Jesus' words: "Many, I say unto you, will seek to enter in, and shall not be able" (Luke 13:24). Launchings are a gala sight. Amid cheers and music the ship, gay with colors, takes to sea. But many an old sailor knows that the launching is not the test of the ship. When northeasters howl and billows roll high, will she beat up against the tempest and make port when other ships go down?

A Christian must be sustained by motives which wear well, by unsmothered faith, and by a hope which refuses to grow dim. Only such a personality can come through to a triumphant close. ●●

UNDERSTANDING THE BIBLE

"Study to shew thyself approved unto God."

The Mosaic Law

LAW is defined as "a rule of conduct, recognized by custom or decreed by formal enactment, considered by a community, nation, or other authoritatively constituted group as binding upon its members." Law is fundamental to any society. Even the most primitive tribes made rules or laws to govern the actions of their members. These laws were more like customs and not always very well observed.

Law is meant to protect the rights and property of individuals. Man is naturally selfish, more protective of his own property than that of others, hence the need for law. Men cannot successfully live in groups without some rule of conduct, thus we have moral laws, laws of etiquette, civil laws and criminal laws.

One of the earliest codes of law that has been preserved is that of Hammurabi, king of Babylonia, who lived about 2000 years before Christ. He prescribed laws for his kingdom concerning everything from the worship of the gods to the administration of justice. His scribes collected the laws and inscribed them on stones to be set up in the principal cities of his kingdom. One of these stones has been found by archæologists and is now in a Paris museum. It is a finely polished block of stone 8 feet high, 2 feet wide, oval in shape and engraved on all sides. The subject matter contained on it is equal to an average-size book of the Bible and contains civil, criminal and commercial laws.

Hammurabi's law was harsh, even to the point of being cruel. His penal code was based on the principle of retaliation, and in the words of one writer, "His legal verdicts were every bit as hard as the stone on which they are inscribed." His law contained little of the attributes of mercy and justice.

No kingdom could long exist without laws. God could not have a kingdom without law, and after choosing His people the next logical step was to provide them with laws. The result was the Mosaic law, the subject of this study. In this first study

we will briefly trace the history of the Jewish people, the children of Israel, and the Law which governed their lives.

I. INTRODUCTION TO THE LAW

To us mortals restricted to three score years and ten or even four or five score, it seems that the hand of God moves ever so slowly. But we are restricted by time while God is bound only by eternity. The two millenniums of time that intervened between God's call to Adam in the garden and the call to Abraham to be the father of the faithful represent many lifetimes to us—but are only a tick of the clock of eternity. Though mortal eyes might not have perceived, God was working toward fulfilling His plan.

Yet another century passed before Isaac, the promised seed was born. It was his son Jacob that was given the name **Israel** and from whose sons the children of Israel derived. Now, another four centuries had slipped into the past, and the children of Israel were slaves in Egypt.

God's chosen people—slaves to a foreign king! Unthinkable! But it was true. They were not only an enslaved people, but they were being oppressed, unbearably ill-treated. And it seemed that God was asleep, that He had forgotten His covenant with their father Abraham.

A. The Years in Egypt

"And Israel [Jacob] took his journey with all that he had, and came to Beer-sheba, and offered sacrifices unto the God of his father Isaac" (Gen. 46:1). This was the beginning of the children of Israel in Egypt—Jacob and his sons and their families—numbering 75 persons. They had gone there to escape the famine in Canaan and after being reunited with Joseph had been given land in Goshen, a fertile plain east of the Nile River. They had been herdsmen in Canaan, and here they settled with their flocks and herds.

God had not forgotten; He was with them still. "And Israel dwelt in the land of Egypt, in the country of Goshen; and they had possessions therein, and grew, and multiplied exceedingly" (Gen.

47:27). "And the children of Israel were fruitful, and increased abundantly, and multiplied, and waxed exceeding mighty; and the land was filled with them" (Ex. 1:7).

How exceedingly Israel multiplied seems incredible at first thought. At the time of the Exodus there were 600,000 men over 20 years of age besides women and children (Num. 1:46). Bible stu-

Moses the Man

Moses, the man God chose to lead the people of Israel out of slavery, stands second only to David in Old Testament history. The Biblical record of his life actually accounts for only a small percent of his 120 years. But despite its brevity, the Bible gives us a fairly complete picture of his character.

Moses was raised as royalty and was "learned in all the wisdom and knowledge of the Egyptians." This knowledge, which included reading and writing, stood him in good stead for recording "all the words of the Lord" (Ex. 24:4). Only the elite were sufficiently educated to be able to write in those days.

Among the characteristics of Moses that stand out in the Biblical narrative are his humility, his ability to lead, his strong disposition, and above all his unswerving faith in God. Of no other man is it recorded in Scripture that he was "very meek, above all the men which were upon the face of the earth" (Num. 12:3). He never put himself first. Greatness came to him; he did not seek it.

At the first, Moses was not distinguished for his patience or self-control; but he added these virtues, as was evidenced by his longsuffering with the unbelieving, murmuring host of people he shepherded through the wilderness. His never-failing faith in God sustained him in his trials with the people.

Wearied to the point of exhaustion by the murmuring Children of Israel, Moses temporarily lost sight of the Almighty at the waters of Meribah and disobeyed, thus forfeiting his right to enter the Promised Land. But denied the right to enter, Moses revealed his true character in his farewell address to the people. There is no sign of bitterness in his words, no complaint or expression of grief, only a plea for God to set another man over them to lead them safely into Canaan. ●●

dents estimate that the total would have been about three million.

God prospered the Israelites and the Egyptians were jealous. "Now there arose up a new king over Egypt, which knew not Joseph" (Ex. 1:8). Joseph had died and the generation that knew him had likewise died, and what he had done for Egypt

during the famine had been forgotten. The new king, believed to have been Ramses II, dealt harshly, making the Hebrews slaves. "And the Egyptians made the children of Israel to serve with rigour: and they made their lives bitter with hard bondage, in mortar, and in brick, and in all manner of service in the field" (vs. 13-14).

The hard work Israel did for the Egyptians has been verified by history. The ruins of great buildings constructed during that period still stand. Thebes was a great city in 2000 B. C. and was at its height at the time of Israel's stay in Egypt. Its magnificent monuments still standing represent the hard labor of the Israelite slaves. In this area is the site of the ruins of one of the largest buildings ever erected, built by the Israelites. The building contains 12 columns each 78 feet high and 11½ feet in diameter. Over the entrance is one stone 40 feet long, weighing 150 tons. This huge stone cap must have been hoisted to its position by hand labor. The huge blocks of stone used in these buildings were removed from the quarry by means of ropes, inclines and men. The pulley had not yet been invented.

In Exodus 5 we read that Pharaoh commanded, "Ye shall no more give the people straw to make brick, as heretofore: let them go and gather straw for themselves. And the tale of the bricks, which they did make heretofore, . . . ye shall not diminish" (vs. 7-8). They were to gather the straw and make as many bricks as before.

Archaeology has proven the Bible account to be true. The ruins of Pithom, an Egyptian city in Goshen, show "the lower courses of brick filled with good chopped straw; the middle courses, with less straw, and that was stubble plucked up by the root (Ex. 5:12); and the upper courses of brick were of pure clay, having no straw whatever."*

The Egyptians left drawings depicting slave labor making bricks and erecting large buildings. The slaves worked under taskmasters armed with whips. Men were harnessed like animals to pull heavy loads. Often they were likewise treated as beasts by their masters.

During the sojourn in Egypt some Jews remembered the true God and worshiped Him. The Egyptians were animal worshipers and their religion had its influence on the Hebrew slaves. Images of their gods and goddesses adorned their homes and public buildings. Most of their deities were animal forms combined with human forms, including cats, cows, crocodiles and calves. Because the Egyptians worshiped animals, they forbade the Israelites' us-

* *Halley's Bible Handbook*, p. 120.

ing them for sacrifice, hence the plea of Moses and Aaron before Pharaoh: "Let us go, we pray thee, three days' journey into the desert, and sacrifice unto the Lord our God" (Ex. 5:3).

B. Exit From Egypt

Realizing the Israelites were a potential threat to his power, Egypt's king took steps to curb their growth. He reasoned that the hard labor he ordered would serve the purpose; and when it did not, he ordered that all boy babies should be killed. It was during this time that Israel's deliverer Moses was born and reared as the son of an Egyptian princess.

Moses was a Hebrew, and as he grew to manhood he took note of the plight of his people, but the time was not yet right to deliver them from slavery. Another forty years slid into the past before God called to Moses as he kept the sheep in the Midian desert. God remembered His promise; He had not forgotten His words to Abraham: "Know this for certain, that your descendants will be aliens living in a land that is not theirs; they will be slaves, and will be held in oppression there for four hundred years. . . and after that they shall come out with great possessions" (Gen. 15:13-14, NEB). The time had come for the fulfillment of this prophecy; they were to leave the land of Egypt.

"And God spake unto Moses and said unto him, . . . I have also heard the groaning of the children of Israel, whom the Egyptians keep in bondage; and I have remembered my covenant. . . I will bring you out from under the burdens of the Egyptians, and I will rid you out of their bondage, . . . and I will bring you in unto the land, concerning the which I did swear to give it to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob; . . . I am the Lord" (Ex. 6:2-8).

It required ten mighty miracles to convince Pharaoh that God meant what He said, but after the tenth plague, the death of the firstborn, Pharaoh not only consented but ordered them to leave at once. It has been suggested that the ten plagues each had a specific purpose. Each was directed against some Egyptian idol, or god. They were designed to demonstrate the glory and power of Jehovah contrasted with Egyptian idols in the sight of the Israelites as well as the Egyptians. They served to increase Israel's faith in their God. It will be noted in the Scriptures that in each case the plague was on the Egyptians and not on the Israelites.

The exact date of the Exodus was not recorded, but competent authorities today set the date at about 1290 B. C., during the reign of the Pharaoh Ramses II. It was in the spring, the first month of the New Year, Abib, when Israel kept the Passover and prepared to leave Egypt. "And Pharaoh rose

up in the night, . . . and he called for Moses and Aaron by night, and said, Rise up and get you forth from among my people, both ye and the children of Israel; and go, serve the Lord, as ye have said. . . . And the Egyptians were urgent upon the people, that they might send them out of the land in haste" (Ex. 12:30-33). This was the word they had waited for; 600,000 Israelite men, plus their families, their belongings packed, partook of the Passover and set out for the Promised Land. They took with them their flocks and herds as well as gold and silver collected from the Egyptians. So eager were they to have Israel leave that they gave them whatever they asked.

The departure of this great horde of people represents the greatest mass migration in history. That it was God's doing is certain. "And the Lord went before them by day in a pillar of a cloud, to lead them the way; and by night in a pillar of fire, to give them light" (Ex. 13:21). God's angel, not God Himself directed their journey.

Pharaoh had ordered their departure, but he soon had a change of heart and ordered his armies to pursue Israel. The fearful Israelites moaned, "Hast thou taken us away to die in the wilderness? . . . it had been better for us to serve the Egyptians." Moses sought to calm their fears: "Fear ye not, stand still, and see the salvation of the Lord."

They had witnessed the ten plagues, each a miracle in itself, and less than 72 hours later they had lost their faith! The miraculous crossing of the Red Sea was to restore that faith, but again it was short-lived. The songs of praise for their deliverance had hardly died away when they murmured against Moses for the bitter water. Another miracle "sweetened" the bitter water, and they journeyed forward.

"On the fifteenth day of the second month after their departing out of the land of Egypt . . . the children of Israel came unto the wilderness of Sin, which is between Elim and Sinai" (Ex. 16:1). Again they murmured—this time for food. God provided manna and strict instructions as to how it should be gathered and stored. God was teaching them to obey even before the giving of the Law. "Then said the Lord unto Moses, Behold, I will rain bread from heaven for you; and the people shall go out and gather a certain rate every day, that I may prove them, whether they will walk in my law, or no" (Ex. 16:4).

Emerging from more than 400 years as slaves, the children of Israel were largely illiterate, an uncouth and barbaric people. In Egypt they had been governed by Egyptian law, but only as slaves; and many taskmasters thought of slaves as not much

above a beast. Now they were faced with the problems of self-government; they were to become a nation in their own right and the need for law was obvious. It must necessarily be stern law, law that could not be broken with impunity. It must be law that would educate, civilize and organize this multitude known as the children of Israel. It must be a law that would lift them above the surrounding nations and set them apart from the nations, for God Himself had chosen them.

The Law given on Sinai, the Mosaic law, filled all these needs. It was first and last a national law, given by God to meet the practical everyday needs of the Israelite nation.

II. THE LAW FROM SINAI

Mount Sinai, also called Horeb, is a jagged mass of granite rock rising 2800 feet above the plain. It is a picture of desolation, like the desert surrounding it. There is only occasionally a spring of water and a few date palms in the area; nothing grows except a little scrub brush outside the oases. The mountain is located near the southern end of the Sinai Peninsula, and it was here God chose to deliver His law to the people.

"In the third month, when the children of Israel were gone forth out of the land of Egypt, the same day came they into the wilderness of Sinai. . . and there Israel camped before the mount" (Ex. 19:1-2). They had now been three months on their journey—and they were farther from the Promised Land than when they started, camped in a desert wasteland.

We might wonder why God chose such a forsaken part of the country to deliver His Law to the people. We can only speculate, but it may have been because there was nothing here to detract them. Here in the wilds, God could command their full attention to teach them His Law.

God gave strict instructions concerning the Mount and the giving of the Law. The people must first cleanse themselves, sanctify themselves and wash their clothes to be ready, "because on the third day the Lord will descend upon Mount Sinai in the sight of all the people." Barriers were put up that no one approach the mount too closely—under penalty of death.

"Moses brought the people out from the camp to meet God, and they took their stand at the foot of the mountain. Mount Sinai was all smoking because the Lord had come down upon it in fire; the smoke went up like the smoke of a kiln; all the people were terrified, and the sound of the trumpet grew ever louder. Whenever Moses spoke, God answered

him in a peal of thunder." "The Lord came down upon the top of Mount Sinai and summoned Moses to the mountain-top, and Moses went up" (Ex. 19: 11-21, NEB).

God Himself did not come down upon the mountain; He sent His angel. Angels are part of God's family and bear His name (Ex. 23:21). God used the fire, the thunder and the smoke to call attention to the magnitude of the event. Giving the Law was a momentous event and He must have their undivided attention. The lightning, thunder, fire and smoke were symbols of God's power, proof of His omnipotence. God meant the people to understand that this Law was from God and not from man.

The Law received at Sinai did not nullify the covenant God had made with Abraham centuries before. His command was still "walk before me, and be thou perfect." God demanded obedience of Abraham and He was demanding obedience from the children of Israel. Although not recorded as the Mosaic law, God's law or what we know as the "royal" law had existed from the time God put His plan in operation on the earth. Before there could be sin, there had to be law, for "sin is not imputed where there is no law" (Rom. 5:13).

Moses received what is commonly known as the Ten Commandments on the Mount. Actually the Ten Commandments formed a very small part of the Law. In addition there were the "judgments," governing their social life, and the "ordinances," governing their religious life. These three elements of the Law covered every aspect of an Israelite's life from birth till death.

Obedience to all parts of the Law was demanded if they would share in God's promises. "And the Lord called unto him [Moses] out of the mountain, saying, . . . Now therefore, if ye will obey my voice indeed, and keep my covenant, then ye shall be a peculiar treasure unto me above all people: . . . And ye shall be unto me a kingdom of priests, and an holy nation" (Ex. 19:3-6). **They had the opportunity of becoming a special people, a people God would prize highly, but in between was the big "IF". "If ye will obey," that was the question.**

Moses called the elders of the people together and delivered God's message, all that God had told him. "And all the people answered together, and said, All that the Lord hath spoken we will do." And Moses carried their answer back to God's angel in the mountain.

Reprints of these studies are available upon request.

WORK

CURSE OR BLESSING?

WHEN God gave Moses a pattern for daily life, He arranged that one day out of seven should be set aside. This seventh day, or sabbath of rest, has received an almost endless amount of discussion. But why not think also about what was supposed to happen on the other six days?

Unfortunately many people today look upon work as a curse, as having neither dignity or interest. It is a sheer nuisance, an almost intolerable necessity that has to be grudgingly executed. The toiling hours of the six days (more commonly five in many parts of the world) are endured for the life (that can be called "living") which begins when the workday is done.

We citizens of modern America can scarcely conceive the real curse that work used to be. The conditions suffered by the working class in ancient Egypt, Rome, Colonial America, China and Haiti are a dark blot on human history. Brutal treatment was the norm, and many a workman died like just another animal. The lot of the serf under the Seleucid kings of Germany and France was little better. Child labor practiced in England and the sweatshops of America during and after the Industrial Revolution was likewise unmerciful, leaving permanent scars on many young lives—and all to satisfy man's selfishness and greed.

The union labor movement

When God wanted sponges and oysters, He made them, and put one on a rock, and the other in the mud. When He made man, He did not make him to be a sponge, or an oyster; He made him with feet and hands, and head, and heart, and vital blood, and a place to use them, and said to him, "Go, work!"

—Henry Ward Beecher

has happily corrected the majority of these flagrant abuses, for which the workman can be grateful. The pendulum in our nation, however, has swung in the opposite direction. Organized labor as a whole has become arrogant, selfish and careless, an attitude which is resulting in defective workmanship and shoddy products. A good day's work in return for a good day's pay is something of the past. The prevailing attitude now is "How much can I get for how little effort?"

The labor movement's overprotection of children today has resulted in a situation almost as serious as exploitation, if not more so. Urban living, with most of the chores performed by electrical appliances and labor-saving devices, leaves children with much free time and little to occupy it. This undoubtedly is a contributing factor in the alarming rise of crime among the young. And many of the smaller jobs which could be done by children and which would

contribute to the beauty and well-being of a community are overlooked by parents who take no interest in the matter. So children litter our streets and yards, deface and destroy property and grow up with a false and negative attitude toward work. There is no doubt a lazy streak in most of us, but like all characteristics of our animal nature it must be controlled. But children who can find little or no worthwhile employment for their time get little help in this direction.

Our government's humanitarian efforts to raise the standard of living of those less fortunate has in many cases adversely affected the general attitude toward work. Far too many today are willing to accept welfare from the state and do nothing, because they can get as much or almost as much as they can by working. The sick and the aged are not included in this class. But for an able-bodied man to receive welfare in lieu of decent employment is a flagrant violation of the Christian ethic. It is a form of stealing. Such a person cannot have respect for himself, and such conduct cannot be condoned.

God meant work to be a blessing. He endowed men with muscles and minds to meet his needs. Work is part of our inheritance, a needed discipline, a necessary part of life, something to be appreciated and enjoyed. The pleasure we gain from it may vary.

But whether our job is challenging, interesting and enjoyable, or just plain monotonous and boring, we should be thankful that we can be gainfully employed when so many in the world are without a job. The opportunity and ability to work should be counted a privilege and a blessing by any person, especially by the Christian. If it is not to us, we need to reshape our thinking.

Paul gave to the Thessalonians a definite directive: "Work with your hands." And again, "He that shall not work, shall not eat." This challenged industry and concentration. This is every Christian's opportunity. There is no greater occasion for the exercise of Christian influence than belongs to the Christian mechanic at his bench, the Christian stenographer at her desk, the Christian housewife in her home, or the Christian laborer in the field or on the road or in the factory. In the place where one labors he is known and read of all. In the place where he labors, labor is a blessing.

Nowhere does the Bible look down upon work as something dishonorable or something to be shunned. David was a shepherd, the early disciples were fishermen, and the Great Apostle to the Gentiles was a tentmaker. Jesus spent long years in the Nazareth carpenter's shed, busying Himself with ordinary manual daily toil. And He taught that men help and obey God by the willingness and thoroughness with which they do their common tasks.

The story is told of a poor servant-girl who found glory in the most ordinary work. "I cook the meals," she said. "I make up the beds, I dust the rooms. Who has bidden me do it? My master and my mistress. Who has given them the right to command me? God has given them it. So I am serving God in heaven as well as them. That is why I am happy. It is as if I were in heaven, doing my work for God!"

Idleness, not work, is the curse. If only we would drop our complainings about the dull routine and grasp every task as an opportunity to show our loyalty to God by doing it well, we would find blessing in all our work. If we are not serving God as we should, our work is not the obstacle. When we say that we would and could be more loyal to God if only we had more time, if only we had some breathing space in the daily routine, some elbow-room, if only our minds were not so clogged and cluttered by daily duties—all that is poor excuse. Busyness has its perils. In the rush and noise and dust of life we *can* lose touch with God. But we *need* not. Our daily work can be our means of service. "An idle mind is the devil's workshop," contains more than a modicum of truth. It is when a

man is idling in his own time that he invites temptation. And it comes.

What is the blessing of work?

It is the satisfaction of having somebody or something to work for which helps make life worth living and contributes to the general good. Look around at your friends and acquaintances, and you will invariably see that the busiest people are the happiest.

It is the honor of the humble task well done. The conscientious workman enjoys a satisfaction which the slipshod never know. It is the lawful pride of using one's God-given abilities as God intended them to be used. It is the joy of being a "worker together with God."

Work is the core of our whole Christian duty, for God will reward every man "according as his works shall be." This is the spiritual work for which our temporal tasks can provide the vehicle. The task of building a Christlike character is work, genuine hard work requiring the utmost in dedication and concentration. The religious world has been lulled to sleep by the "nothing-to-do" opiate universally distributed by theology. This doctrine that Christ died for us and we have nothing to do has gained wide acceptance, so pleasing is it to our "lazy streak." But, unfortunately, the theory is man-made and not of divine origin. A person accepting this theory is analogous to the able-bodied person who accepts welfare instead of working. He is not doing his share of the work, and sooner or later he will be sadly disappointed.

As we observe Labor Day this month, let us give thanks to God for the blessing of work. And above all, let us give thanks that we know what we must do to obtain salvation, that we must work with ourselves and refine our carnal natures until our whole lives become a blessing to God. For in the future, as well as in the present, we do not get something for nothing. ●●

A RECIPE

- 1 cup of good thoughts
- 1 cup of kind deeds
- 1 cup of consideration for others
- 2 cups of sacrifice for others
- 3 cups of forgiveness
- 2 cups of well-beaten faults

Mix thoroughly all ingredients and add one cup of pure, fresh water of life. Fold in 4 cups of prayer and faith to lighten the ingredients and raise the texture to great height in Christian living. Pour mixture into the crucible of your daily life. Bake well with the intense heat of Christian zeal. Serve with a smile.

"MY Johnny doesn't stand a chance to grow up like a normal child," exclaimed an exasperated young mother to her neighbor. "School is just ruining him. His teacher doesn't understand him, and the other children are so rough. His grandparents are just spoiling him. And he doesn't listen to a word I say."

"And who's to blame?" replied the well-meaning neighbor, not intending to be discourteous or cruel.

Passing the blame can be observed in almost every activity and relationship of life. We see it in the schoolchild, who finds it so easy to say "*he* made me do it." In the office it is always the next girl—and the next, and the next—who made the obvious mistake; no one wants to own it. A man gets hurt on the job. It is never because *he* was careless. Oh, no! It was a poor tool he was using, or he lacked instruction, or someone was bothering him, or he wasn't feeling well, or his boss made the mistake. And so on, and on.

We humans are contradictory. We want personal responsibility, and all is glorious so long as credit is being handed out. But when it comes to blame, we draw back. "It wasn't my fault." The blame belongs to someone else. Or circumstances. Or an overpowering ill nature. Anything, anyone, so long as we can stand excused. When all else fails, we blame the weak nature God gave us, telling ourselves "I just couldn't help it. This is the way God made me."

Alibis for succumbing to temptation have been circulating ever since Adam ate the forbidden fruit

and put the blame on Eve. There seems to be some petty satisfaction in blindly excusing ourselves.

And strange as it may seem, we don't bother ourselves with consistencies in how or to whom we transfer the blame. The only immediate concern is to justify that perfect self-image and leave our reputation unharmed.

A prime example is found in Scripture. It was Aaron, the brother of Moses. The Israelites were at Mount Sinai; Egypt was behind them, the Promised Land ahead. Moses had gone to the mountaintop to commune with the angel of God. He had gone to bring word to them from the Lord.

But the days grew long, and the people wearied of waiting. Still fresh in their minds was the idolatry they had seen in Egypt, the gods which the Egyptians had fashioned and worshiped.

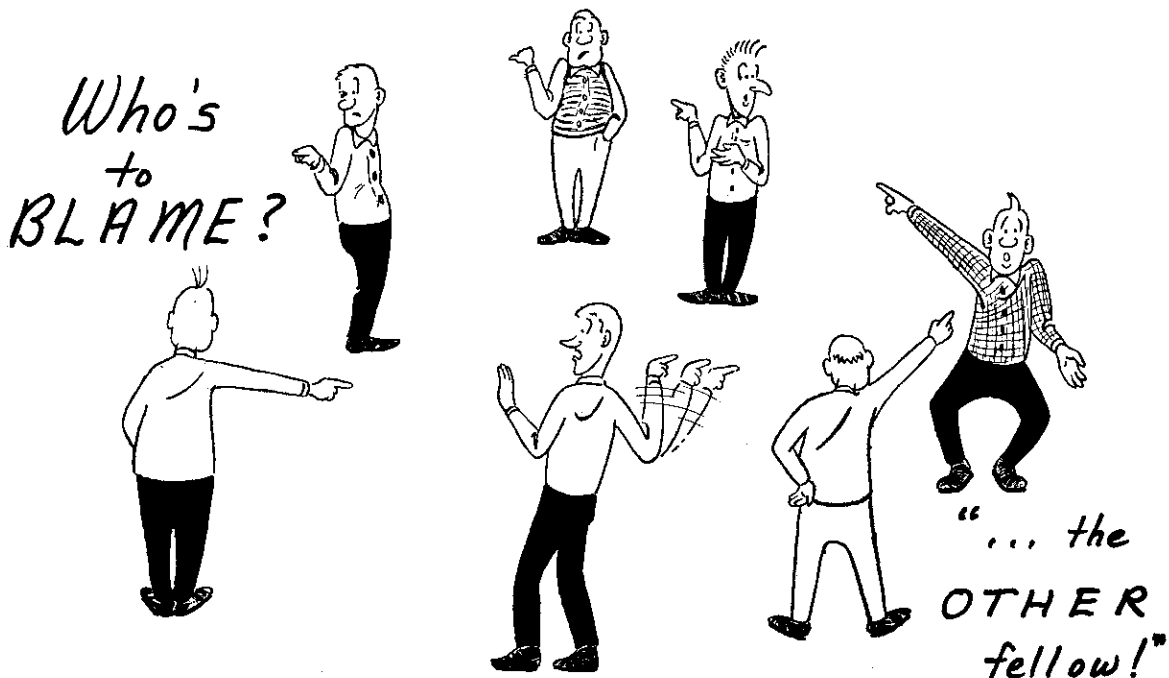
They had an idea, and they approached Aaron: "Come, make us a god to go at the head of us; this Moses, the man who brought us up from Egypt, we do not know what has become of him" (Ex. 32:1, Jerusalem Bible).

Very likely Aaron was afraid. What would he do if the people should riot and make trouble? How would he handle them in Moses' absence?

Aaron conceded quickly to their idea. "Take the gold rings out of the ears of your wives and your sons and daughters, and bring them to me" (v. 2). At least, he would be using *their* gold, not *his*.

The people brought their gold, and Aaron "melted the metal down and cast an effigy of a calf." The

(Continued on page 25)



Christian Youth in These Times

A GOOD DISAPPOINTMENT

MILLIE'S lower lip was drooping. After all that hard work and all that practicing, and she wasn't wanted in the church choir—she wasn't even going to be given a chance!

"I'm very sorry, Millie, but... Well, we only have so many uniforms, and" Miss Dodsun was trying to be kind. Millie knew that, but right now she didn't appreciate Miss Dodsun's kindness. "You can keep practicing, Millie. Maybe next year." She smiled pleasantly and Millie turned to go away. Miss Dodsun surely could give a fancy speech!

Millie ambled down the road, wishing home were five miles away instead of a half mile. Rainbow, her dog, came out to meet her, but even Rainbow could not bolster her spirits. The dog wagged her tail trying to get Millie's attention, but Millie did not notice. Millie was even angry with her dog!

She was sure Mother would need her to do some errands. It seemed like Mom was always tired out these days. She was always waiting with jobs for Millie when she got home from school. Millie pushed open the door—not too gently.

"Is that you, Dear?" was her mother's cheery greeting. "I'm so glad you got home early tonight. I'm so very tired. Could you please help me by doing a little delivering? Mrs. Bradley's tablecloth and napkins are done, and here is Mrs. Simpson's new robe. And they would like them as soon as possible."

"Too bad!" was Millie's sarcastic response. "Can't Ginger ever help? Seems like I get all the work to do around here."

The hurt inside Millie was deep and growing worse. She took the finished articles her mother had spent so many hours on, threw the carefully marked boxes into a shopping bag and went out the door, letting it slam behind her. Maybe Mother would catch on that things had not been going just right for Millie today.

Mother only shook her head and gave Millie a look of worried disappointment.

"Ginger is older and does less and less of the deliveries," Millie sputtered to herself. It just didn't seem fair, even if Ginger did help more with the housework and the sewing. Well, nothing about life was fair anyway. Hadn't Millie just missed out on a chance of a lifetime—and all because of Miss Dodsun?

Millie unlocked her bicycle, tossed the shopping bag into the basket and started down the street. The cool late afternoon breeze felt good on Millie's face. She began to pedal more slowly as she watched the house numbers—114, 110, 106 Wilson Place. She wouldn't even look that way. Right now she didn't want to lay eyes on a girl named Nancy. Her mother didn't have to take in sewings and Millie was quite sure Nancy would make one of the best alto singers in the choir. That Nancy, she seemed to get all the good luck. Or something.

Mrs. Simpson didn't live far beyond Nancy's—44 Wilson Place. Millie carefully braced her bicycle and picked up the Simpson package. "I sure hope she has the money ready," Millie was muttering as she approached the house. "I'm in no mood for her gossipy talk tonight."

Mrs. Simpson opened the door and confided quickly her warmest thanks to Millie. "I'm so glad to get this robe tonight, you know—it is for Mr. Simpson. His birthday! Won't he be surprised? A beautiful silk handmade robe, and beautifully done!" She held up the robe to show Millie, who had seen it every day for the last week.

Millie was not at all impressed. "The price is marked on the box," she said curtly. She was trying to hurry Mrs. Simpson, but to no avail. And the questions began to roll. Had she heard about Mrs. Raymond? And wasn't that terrible about the young Lake boy? Yes, terrible! And she kept right on talking as she counted out the money. "Is that right, \$12.50 on the balance? And do you like to sing, Millie? You know my Lorraine—" Mrs. Simpson yawned with deep satisfaction—"is going to be in the new church choir. Too bad you don't like to sing. Or do you?"

Millie winced with anger, which Mrs. Simpson noticed. "A little," was Millie's faint reply. Millie

had heard enough. She had to leave—and she did, just as soon as she managed a stiff “Thank you.”

Angrily she sped down the street to the next customer. “Why, oh why!” she protested, as if scolding her mother for sending her on these errands. Mrs. Bradley’s bright yellow house was just ahead. Mrs. Bradley was of a quieter sort. At least she wouldn’t talk your ear off.

Millie’s anger had cooled a little by the time she was ready to press the doorbell at the Bradley home.

“Here’s your new tablecloth. And the napkins. I believe Mother said there is a complete set here.” Millie was trying hard to be pleasant.

“Oh, thank you so much, Dear. Step into my kitchen and I will give you your money. How is the family?”

“Fine, thank you.” Millie noticed the airmail letter on the table. “Is that from your son?” she asked?

Mrs. Bradley nodded. “Yes, we were hoping he’d be home by now. But his orders were changed the last minute, and he has to stay another six months.”

“You must be very disappointed,” ventured Millie, realizing suddenly she wasn’t the only disappointed person in the world.

Mrs. Bradley laughed shakily. “Of course, I was. Terribly at first. But when I saw that motto on the wall—” she pointed to the plaque over the table which read, “How do you take your disappointment?” Millie stared at the words.

Mrs. Bradley talked on. “This isn’t the first disappointment I’ve had, and it won’t be the last. When I was a little girl, I used to cry for hours when things didn’t go my way, but gradually I came to see there is something good even in our disappointments, for all these things are part of the heavenly plan. We don’t like disappointments, I know, but they make us grow up, face life and be mature. Disappointments test us.”

Mrs. Bradley laughed again. “Listen to me, preaching away, and you waiting here for your money!” She thrust a bill into her hand. “The change is yours for such quick delivery.”

“Thank you, Mrs. Bradley,” she smiled as she spoke. “And good-by.”

Millie pedalled home the long way. She had to think things out. Mrs. Bradley’s optimistic words had touched her more than Mrs. Simpson’s cruel chatter. “Disappointments help us grow up, face life and be mature.” The words kept going through her mind. And she began to wonder. If Mrs. Bradley was right, did Millie really want to grow up and be mature? Could she ever learn to take disappointments?

A verse she had learned flashed through her

mind. “I can do all things through Christ, which strengtheneth me.” Millie took a deep breath and prayed. “Forgive me, Lord. And help me to take my disappointments better, so I can be a better Christian.”

She pedalled faster now. How silly she had been! Life was not over because she couldn’t sing in the church choir. Didn’t Mother really need her help at home anyway—with the deliveries! After school each day she could be a big help, if she just decided to be and applied herself. Maybe Mother needed her more than the church choir. Maybe the Lord was trying to tell her just this.

Suddenly she realized, as she was putting her bike away, that the hurt was almost gone. She recalled how angry she had felt when she had taken her bicycle out.

“Mother, here’s your money, and I hope you get lots more sewing orders! More like Mrs. Bradley.” She squeezed her mother’s hard working hands. “I’m going to try harder to help you more and not grumble so much. Just keep the work coming, Mom, and I’ll do the delivering.”

Millie’s mother was so pleased with the change in her younger daughter’s attitude that she could hardly believe it was true. Millie had been so sour so long. “I do hope you keep this new spirit. I can surely use it. And I certainly do need you. And look, Millie, what Miss Dodsun just brought me—this lovely material—for the choir robes for her new choir. I got the sewing job. Isn’t that wonderful? We surely can use the money.”

Millie’s eyes studied the soft rose material. It was her favorite color. But she could be tested again this time, and take it right. She would prove to God that she could. She choked back the tears, saying, in a forced tone but very genuine, “Yes, Mother! It’s wonderful. Looks like you’ll have enough work so I can help you with some of it.” ●●

O Captain of my soul, lead on;
I follow Thee, come dark or dawn.

Only vouchsafe three things I crave:
When terror stalks, help me be brave;

When others lose faith, can scarce endure
The call of Truth, help me be pure;

When vows grow dim and men dare do,
When others scorn, help me be true.

READ *for Your LIFE!*

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

GOD'S SPIRITUAL CREATION

THE KINGDOM OF GOD

THE GREAT APOSTASY

AFTER DEATH, WHAT?

THE DEVIL AND HELL

TRINITY OR UNITY?

THE HOLY SPIRIT

THE ATONEMENT

THE SABBATH

ALL for \$1.00, Postpaid.

If Christ Paid Our Penalty . . .

At one time I had a lot of trouble getting rid of a doctrine that had been drilled into me for years. That is, that Christ paid for my sins, that He paid the price for me.

But if Christ died instead of me, and death is the penalty for sin, then why do I still die?

And if by His death Christ paid our debt, why did Paul say in I Corinthians 15:17, "And if Christ be not raised, your faith is vain; ye are yet in your sins." How could we be "yet in our sins" if we were believers and Christ died to take away our sins?

Also, if someone has paid our debt, the debt is not forgiven but paid for. If the debt is paid, we do not need forgiveness. So why do we pray the Lord's Prayer, "Forgive our debts, as we forgive our debtors"?

And if Christ has paid for our sins, why do we have to "work out" our own salvation? And why must we endure unto the end to be saved? (Matt. 24:13; 10:22). For this is what Jesus said.

So many have been taught eternal security, but they will not see the glories of God and His wonderful Son Jesus until they are re-educated.

Mr. L., Nottinghamshire, England

One Lord, One Faith

(Continued from page 9)

God permit such a cruel thing to happen to His Son?

We must remember that God does not see events the same as we see them. Our vision is limited by our limited perception and experience. God looks at the overall plan He is working out, even an eternal purpose, and sees everything in relation to it.

God could have arranged so that neither Christ nor any of His followers would have had to suffer. In fact, He could have created a perfect world without sickness, suffering or sin. But God did not choose to do this. His wisdom arranged this world so that men might prove themselves and make their lives worthwhile, so that some might sort themselves out as choice material for His future, superior arrangement. He created all men free to spend their lives as they should choose, to use their advantages and disadvantages to develop or neglect themselves as they might choose.

Christ came as the ideal, the perfect life dedicated wholly to pleasing God. He came to set the pattern for men to follow, and was superior in every respect. The Bible tells us He was "in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin" (Heb. 4:15).

If Christ had not died, or had He died a natural death in old age, or had He been taken directly to be rewarded by His Father without passing through death, He could not have been the strength and solace He was to those who held to His faith in the early centuries when men were hostile and persecution was rife. During those centuries many had to surrender their lives and suffer, or deny their faith. Some chose the former, and Christ's courage and submission in suffering was real strength to them in their hour of trial. The apostle Peter could write to his suffering brethren, "Beloved, think it not strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you, as though some strange thing happened unto you: but rejoice, inasmuch as ye are partakers of Christ's suffering; that, when his glory shall be revealed, ye may be glad also with exceeding joy" (I Pet. 4:12-13).

Christ's submitting to physical death was the crowning act of obedience in a lifelong faithful submission to His Father. He gave Himself totally, even to the last living particle of His own nature and will. And this, too, is an example to us. "For even hereunto were ye called: because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that ye should follow his steps" (I Pet. 2:21)—not that we must be crucified physically, but that our surrender must be as complete as was His. ●●

MEGIDDO MESSAGE

Kathy Kandor's Korner

Keeping A Straight Face...?

"GUESS who I saw in Dr. Martin's waiting room, Mom." Janet was just home from the dentist's.

I had no idea, of course, and continued mixing a batch of ginger snaps.

"Rodney Cooke! The same Rodney that used to be in our class at school, until they moved away a couple of years ago. If he isn't a born entertainer! He had the attention of everybody in that waiting room, and you know how big it is, Mom."

"Everybody?" I questioned. "Even—Janet?"

"Well," Janet hesitated. She didn't know quite what to say. "I didn't really laugh, but I just *had* to smile. The way he says things, Mom, it's really amusing. Nobody could keep a straight face."

"But Janet, we've talked about foolishness before, haven't we? Can you imagine Mary or Salome, or Priscilla or Aquila, or Brother Paul laughing at the foolishness they happened to see at the market place, or in the town, or wherever they happened to be in a day's business?"

"I really wonder," defended Janet. "Those people back there probably never laughed at anything."

I wasn't surprised at Janet's attitude. "I'm afraid human nature has always been the same, my dear. Much as we might like to think they had it easier. Solomon was aware of this cheap human tendency in people even way back there. He had lots to say about fools, foolishness, and folly. Remember?"

"Can't think of a thing."

"Well, I can think of one. One that says, 'Go from the presence of a foolish man.' And there's another that says: 'Folly is joy to him that is destitute of wisdom.' We don't want to be part of such folly, do we?"

Janet did not answer; she was thinking.

"Paul was always rejoicing, but that was nothing to do with foolishness."

"But what do you do, Mom, when you run into something like I did at the dentist's?" I was pleased with Janet's question, and happy to try to answer.

"This was a problem to me, Janet, for a long time, and the best I've found to fight it is to put my mind to work rehearsing some poem, or Bible passage, or something I've learned that is really good to think about. And I can tell you, it works! It's like setting your mind to pick up just one frequency, then everything else gets tuned out—because you have nothing that will pick it up. None of the silliness around you will bother you a bit, if you do this."

"That sounds like a good system, Mom. I'll try it next time."

Won't you try it too? It really works!

Remember, our good brother Paul urged us to "make the very most" of our time, for "these are evil days."

Christians are always rejoicing but—never foolish!

Yours in the straight-faced contest,

Kathy

Words to WALK By

Doing nothing is the most tiresome job in the world because it is impossible to quit and take a rest.

The man who practices what he preaches doesn't have to preach so much.

Almost right is still wrong.

When looking for faults, use a mirror, not a telescope.

The poorest man is he whose only wealth is money.

Worry is like a rocking chair; it may give you something to do, but it won't get you anywhere.

If God sends us down stony paths, He will provide strong shoes.

Learn to hold loosely all that is not eternal.

An atheist is like a man who builds a house without windows and then blames God because he has to live in the dark.

The strongest argument for the Christian faith is the Christian life.

LETTERS

Tapes Are a Blessing

Having found the Megiddo Church means so very much to me, and to hear personally from you makes me seem closer to all of you. I have received the cassette tapes which I ordered (in fact I received my order within a week) and I want all of you to know how wonderful they are. It is indeed next best to being there in person with you. It is a wonderful idea and I hope everyone who possibly can will avail themselves of the opportunity to get these tapes.

I did not have a tape player when I first saw the tapes mentioned in the *Message*. But I went right out and bought one and ordered the entire first series. I also want the circulating tapes. We play them over and over and attend church with you in our hearts and minds every Sunday in this way. They are a great blessing to me and my family, and I hope you will continue to put out these tapes.

Knoxville, Maryland

J. B.

Evolutionists Have Failed

It seems to me that evolutionists have failed. They have been arguing in circles, dating rocks by the fossils in them, then in turn dating the fossils by the rocks! They are like the jeweler I read about, who was proud of the fact that his clocks were always right. He checked them daily by the factory whistle. One day the factory manager dropped by. "Our whistle hasn't been a second off in years," he said to the jeweler. "We set our time by the clocks in your window!"

I believe God is our Creator. In the book of Job are many questions about who made the earth. "Where wast thou when I laid the foundations of the earth?" "Did I ask counsel of thee?" We are God's creation, and we should be humble enough to acknowledge it.

Potsdam, New York

O. W.

Grateful

I think your set of booklets on Bible subjects is wonderful. So I am asking for another set to give to a friend.

As I started to read your booklets, there were a few things I didn't quite agree with. But as I read on I got the point which you brought out. I am really impressed by what these books bring out on Bible teachings.

Louisa, Kentucky

T. B.

Gratitude

Just a few words to express my gratitude for the high standard of holiness you uphold in this present evil age. While Jordan overflows her banks it is good to know some are not willing to be swept away by her muddy waves.

I do not see everything just the way you teach it, but I do appreciate people who stick up for what they feel is right and I am thankful for other people who I feel are trying to work on their old natures.

Russellville, Kentucky

G. E.

Jesus Calls Us

We need to keep near to our heart the calling of Jesus: "Follow me." How seriously we have taken this calling will show in the progress we have made in Christlike living. And soon, Christ shall reveal our progress to us in person. How near, then, is the calling to our hearts?

If we realize the seriousness of it, we will joyfully obey, because it is touching our heart.

And for serious believers, the signs of the times have come upon us. The entire world is disrupted by so many evils, with no solution. Men are becoming more and more unsure of next year. This is only the beginning. I pray and prepare with you: May the Lord be my Shepherd.

British Columbia, Canada

R. F.

Studying

I have been studying the booklet on the Atonement, which you publish. I gleaned several important points. First, every individual is responsible for his or her sins. Second, every man or woman shall bear his or her own burden. Third, there is no substitution in the words of Jesus. Fourth, Jesus never once mentioned that He came to shed His literal blood on Calvary as a sacrifice for sin. There are many, many Bible-supported points in this booklet. I have to do much studying to be able to reveal the truth to my fellow colleagues here in Liberia.

I have also learned that "original sin" does not exist. I also learned the meaning of the word "propitiation." It means, "that which obtains forgiveness." Your booklet is an eye-opener to the study of the Scripture.

Monrovia, Liberia, Africa

J. D.

Obituary

Mary E. Shaver

On August 5, death came peacefully to a friend and sister of North Rose, New York, Mrs. Mary E. Shaver. Sister Shaver became acquainted with the Megiddo Church about 1935, and in recent years was a frequent correspondent, sending many short contributions for our *Megiddo Message*, to which she subscribed.

Sister Shaver is survived by one brother, Free-mont Knapp; three sisters, Lois Lott, Verna Kruse, Eva Kruse; one daughter, Mrs. Dorothy Palmer; four grandchildren, thirteen great-grandchildren, and two great-great grandchildren. During years of failing health she was tenderly cared for by a devoted granddaughter, Anita Costello, who lived with her.

Funeral services were conducted on August 9 by our pastor, Kenneth E. Flowerday. ●●

MEGIDDO MESSAGE

Let God Be True

(Continued from page 5)

this text. Evil is what God is trying to *lessen*, not increase; and the Hebrew word translated "create" in this text can mean just this: "to cut, pare down." In fact, this is God's method of making peace, by cutting down evil, eliminating the source of strife and hatred. All through the ages God has been working with men, He has been trying to decrease evil and build up good. During the days of the Israelites, thousands perished because they were unyielding and disobedient—to make room for others who might benefit from God's laws and instructions. To cut and pare down evil is the purpose of all law.

You ask about Amos 3:6, "Shall there be evil in a city, and the Lord hath not done it?" Here again is an illustration of the Hebrews crediting all things to God; but the "evil" is not evil in the sense of unrighteousness, but evil that is judgment or punishment for wrongdoing.

A footnote in the New Catholic Edition gives this thought: "*Evil in a city*: he speaks of the evil of punishments of war, famine, pestilence, desolation, etc., but not of the evil of sin, of which God is not the author."

The marginal rendering of this text in our Common Version presents another thought, also harmonious with general Bible teaching. It would suggest "evil" meaning "wrong" or misconduct on the part of the people. "Shall there be evil in a city, and shall not the Lord do somewhat?" The New English Bible, in a footnote gives this also: "If there is evil in a city, will not the Lord act?" God has promised to take action against all workers of evil; and in due time He shall, even in our own day.

You also use Ezekiel 20:25 to show that the Lord leads men into evil: "I gave them also statutes that were not good, and judgments whereby they should not live." But you must not have read the remainder of the chapter. The Prophet relates how repeatedly God had given them His laws and statutes, only to have them refuse and reject them (see Ezek. 20:7, 11-12, 16, 21). Verse 25 is God's last resort: He allows them to go their own way, to follow their own laws, which were not good—all because they had rejected His good laws so continually. Moffatt translates this text: "I let them have laws that were evil"—He simply permitted it, since that was their choice. God is often said to do what He permits men to do.

If as much time and energy went into proving the Bible true as goes into trying to pick it to pieces, we would have a different situation in our

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world today. It is a tragedy to try to tear down faith in the Bible when it is the only source of divine wisdom and guidance available to us today. Without its guiding light we are in darkness. One man's opinion is as valid as another man's. If we would be right, we must rely on something solid; and that "something" is the Word of God.

Who's to Blame?

(Continued from page 19)

people were pleased. " 'Here is your God, Israel,' they cried, 'who brought you out of the land of Egypt!' "

Straightway Moses came down from the mountain to face Aaron with the abominable act. "What has this people done to you, for you to bring such a great sin on them?" (v. 21). *Why*, Aaron, did you *do* such a thing?

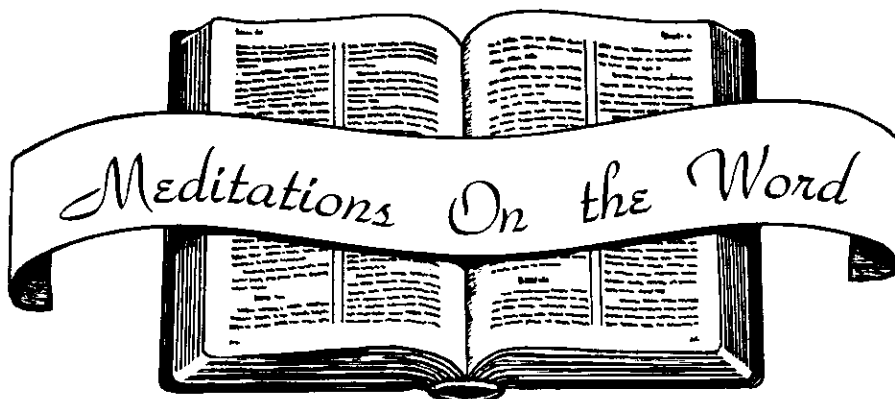
Listen to Aaron's answer. He first blamed the people. "You know yourself how prone this people is to evil" (v. 22). And then he blamed circumstance. "They said to me, 'Make us a god.' . . . So I said to them, 'Who has gold?', and they took it off and brought it to me. I threw it into the fire and out came this calf" (vs. 23-24).

Can't we see Aaron? "Don't blame me," he told Moses. "All I did was throw the people's jewelry into the fire, and—out walked this calf!"

This unique placing of the blame is plainly ridiculous—in Aaron. But what about the times when the blame belongs to *us*? What do *we* say? What do *we* do? How often have we been guilty, yet have pointed the accusing finger at someone else?

When all is said and done, we know that God has given us no more than we can shoulder, and that we shall ultimately have to stand before Him and give account. We know as well as Adam and as well as Aaron that alibis will not work. The Bible principle is steadfast, "His own iniquities shall take the wicked himself, and he shall be holden with the cords of his sins" (Prov. 5:22). The God we serve will not be put off because we blame someone else, or because we complain about our depressing circumstances or our poor lot in life. He has made us what we are, and He expects us to make good where we are. If we fail, we—and we only—will be to blame. ●●

Do not waste a day, for each day holds opportunities for prayer, for kindness, for self-control.



"Ye have said, It is vain to serve God: and what profit is it that we have kept his ordinance, and that we have walked mournfully before the Lord of hosts?"
—Malachi 3:14.

BREATHES there a man with soul so great that he has never entertained the feeling herein described? Think well before answering, and be honest with yourself.

This envy of the ungodly seems to be a phase which at some time touches virtually every life: stubborn and insistent in some cases, mild and transitory in others. To a few the emotion may be subconscious, but disturbingly so; to more it is a painfully evident and indwelling fact. Part of the difference may be attributed to temperamental variations; still more to the degree of faith and depth of conviction. In the first flush of enthusiasm it seems a wonderful way in which to travel. But when the going becomes rugged, when the discipline of the law of God strikes a cherished propensity, an unchanged taste (Jer. 48:11) is likely to cause us to murmur, "And now we call the proud happy; yea, they that work wickedness are set up; yea, they that tempt God are even delivered" (Mal. 3:15). We then fail to look to the end of the matter.

The Psalmist David, that all-too-human character to whom

we are indebted for so much that is beautiful and inspiring, was frank to confess that this had once been his frame of mind. A dangerous condition he found it, too. "But as for me, my feet were almost gone; my steps had well nigh slipped. For I was envious, when I saw the prosperity of the wicked . . . They are not in trouble as other men; neither are they plagued like other men . . . they have more than heart could wish. Behold, these are the ungodly, who prosper in the world; they increase in riches" (Ps. 73:2-3, 5, 7, 12).

There was much that is true in his complaint. While the ungodly have troubles and problems which do not appear to the observer whose view is clouded by envy, still they do often have a degree of prosperity and earthly consolations, of riches and power, which for very good reasons may be denied the followers of the narrow way of self-sacrifice. The difficulty is in seeing the reasons. As St. Paul once wrote, "No chastening for the present seemeth to be joyous, but grievous: nevertheless afterward"—ah, yes! *afterward*. The longer view, the outcome of it all, is what makes the effort

worthwhile. It was the "afterward" which proved the Psalmist's salvation, as he relates in vs. 17-19: "Until I went into the sanctuary of God; then understood I their end. Surely thou didst set them in slippery places: thou castedst them down to destruction. How are they brought into desolation as in a moment!"

As a result of this experience, he could afterward say (Ps. 37:1-3), "Fret not thyself because of evildoers, neither be thou envious against the workers of iniquity. For they shall soon be cut down as the grass, and wither as the green herb. Trust in the Lord and do good, so shalt thou dwell in the land, and verily thou shalt be fed." No doubt he was reminded of the words of the ancient sage, "The triumphing of the wicked is short, and the joy of the hypocrite but for a moment" (Job 20:5).

The desire for immediate results is a plague which affects all classes of humanity and every branch of activity. The speculator expects his shares to rocket in value from the day of their purchase; the "reducer" is grieved when the scales fail to show a loss of ten pounds at the end of the first week of the diet;

the junior gardener digs up his seeds to see if they have sprouted. Even in religion, millions are taught to expect salvation at the beginning, rather than at the end of the race. One of the stern lessons of the Christian life is that the eternal rewards are not for the quick-profit speculator but for the long-term investor, the individual willing to invest his entire lifetime in the King's business, who can "learn to labor and to wait."

When the disciples, in a mood of reflection, came to Jesus recounting their sacrifices and inquiring, "What shall we have therefore?" He promised them, in addition to eternal life, a hundredfold in this present time; but nowhere did He intimate that this comes at the beginning. Far from it. For one thing, we are naturally in no condition to receive it; our hands are not clean enough to hold the blessings of the Eternal. Our tastes are such that we would not recognize the "hundredfold." Much of it we might not even like.

We must learn again and again the elemental truth that we cannot have everything—only a choice of things. What do we want? We shall find ourselves encumbered with a great deal of "excess baggage," of which we must divest ourselves before the hundredfold of blessing can be realized. Naturally this process is more or less painful, and this is where and when our envy of the wicked is likely to manifest itself. "What profits it?"

This is the point where lack of faith in the future glory can break us. The world may profess to despise "reward morality," but both the Scriptures and all human experience reveal that complete crucifixion of self requires an incentive beyond naked principle. We have the example of Jesus Himself, "Who, for the joy that was set before Him, endured the cross, despising the shame" (Heb. 12:2). We have His many promises, in Revelation 2 and 3, of real and tangible rewards to "him that overcometh." We have the pattern of St. Paul who fought a good fight and kept the faith in anticipation of the crown of life laid up for him (II Tim. 4:7-8).

The future is the important thing, for this life is short, and eternity is very long. The hundredfold in this life can certainly be attained, but only when we throw our whole soul and mind and body into the quest for righteousness and eternal life. With our tastes and relationships changed from human to divine standards, from self-seeking to God's bondmen, we would not for the world change places with those whom we once envied. Happiness eludes us when we pursue it with a selfish motive, but walks close by our side when we lose ourselves in a higher service. Peace of mind comes by the

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pursuit of truth, regardless of consequences. It all adds up to, "He that findeth his life shall lose it, and he that loseth his life for my sake shall find it" (Matt. 10:39).

The complainers of our text were evidently of the class described by our Lord in Matthew 6, who parade their self-denials, who give alms and pray to be seen and heard of men, and disfigure their faces to call attention to their fasting. The world is full of this sort of exhibitionism, ranging from the self-torture of the Hindu ascetic to the mild abstinence of Lent, so familiar of late years. Such things are not acceptable to Him who said, "Rend your hearts and not your garments." There is an outward humility which covers a tremendous amount of pride—a stench in the nostrils of the Almighty. To "walk mournfully," in hope of recognition by man, is rank hypocrisy. The true Christian is always rejoicing, and his joy in truth is reflected in his countenance. ●●



Consecrated?

*Consecration leaves no choosing,
Consecration yields up all;
Consecration means obedience
To the Father's every call.*

*It means dying--it means living;
Death to self and life to God;
It means work or patient waiting,
Or submission 'neath the rod.*

*It means such a full surrender
That we never need to ask
Why God gives our faith such testing
Or assigns so hard a task.*

*We are here to be perfected,
And our God our need can see;
Rarest gems bear hardest grinding,
God's own workmanship to be.*

--Contributed.

