

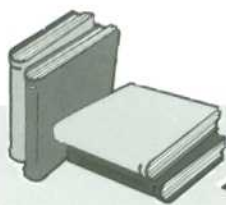
Megiddo Message

October, 1994
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He left the lights on...

MEMORIAL ISSUE



Is It Worth Knowing?

Everywhere we turn today we are bombarded by information—there is so much knowledge available, so much one can learn about almost anything and everything, so many experts in fields of all kinds and descriptions, from the most useful to the most useless.

To the serious, striving Christian, all this wealth of information poses a new test: to be wisely discriminating in what we allow to enter our minds. Information may be available, accurate, and interesting, yet is it the *best* investment of our time and thought-power? Is it *worth* absorbing? For in choosing what we read, we are choosing what we will think about, and talk about, and be interested in.

God does not want us to be sponges soaking up whatever happens to be around us. We are not free to read just any print that catches our fancy. Paul's advice to Timothy is definite: "*Timothy, keep safe that which has been entrusted to you [the eternal treasure]. Turn a deaf ear to empty and worldly chatter, and the contradictions of so-called 'knowledge' (1 Tim. 6:20, NEB). Or as translated in the Jerusalem Bible, 'Have nothing to do with the pointless philosophical discussions and antagonistic beliefs of the 'knowledge' which is not knowledge at all.'*"

When it
comes to choosing
what we put into
our minds, we
cannot be too
selective.

There are many types of knowledge worth our pursuit—knowledge which is beneficial in building up our inner life, our faith, our courage, our trust in God. There is other—*much* other—knowledge which is not worth knowing. Paul advised the Romans that they be "*wise unto that which is good, and simple concerning evil*" (Rom. 16:19).

We must be selective, making decisions daily, hourly, momentarily about what we will permit in our minds, and—more especially—what we will retain there.

As striving, serious Christians, we are not competing for the amount of information we can store in our minds. Not to be fully informed about the trivia of this world, not to know the big names in sports or entertainment or society, is no discredit to the Christian; on the contrary, it is a credit. The stars of this world are not our stars. The heroes of this world are not our heroes. We belong to a different cosmos, so why should we burden our minds with the details of this one?

When it comes to choosing what we will put into our minds, we cannot be too selective. Said the Wise Man many years before the printing press was invented, "Of the making of books there is no end." What would Solomon think if he could visit a modern library or bookstore?

We will never know everything about anything. The serious issue is, what is *important* for us to know—from God's point of view? This is where we want to focus our attention. This is what Jesus did. He was not pursuing all the knowledge available in His day. He was selective. "*I seek not mine own will*" He said, "*but the will of Him that sent me.*" The apostle Paul wrote to the young Timothy, commend-

(Continued on page 27)

Megiddo means ...

"a place of troops" (Gesenius' Hebrew Lexicon); "a place of God" (Young's Analytical Concordance). Megiddo was and is a town in Palestine, strategically located, and the scene of frequent warfare. In the spiritual parallel, it is a place where soldiers engaged in spiritual warfare gather to renew their strength and courage (II Cor. 10:4-5).

We believe ...

- in God, the Creator and sustainer of the earth, the world, the universes, and all life, in whom we "live, and move, and have our being."
- in the Bible as our only source of true knowledge about God and His purposes and plans for His creation and for the salvation of humankind.
- in Jesus Christ, the Son of God and our Perfect Example, who was conceived of the Holy Spirit and born of a virgin; who ministered among His brethren, was crucified, resurrected, and taken to heaven and seated at the right hand of the Father, crowned with immortal glory, and who shall shortly return to be king of the whole earth.
- in the Holy Spirit, the openly manifest power of God, which God bestowed at various times and in various ways to reveal His knowledge to humankind, to support His spokesmen, to confirm His utterances, and to demonstrate His supreme power and authority.
- in life as the gift of God, and in our sacred responsibility to use it for God and His coming Kingdom.
- in humankind as providing the raw material from which shall be selected and developed a superior, God-honoring people upon whom God will bestow the blessings of immortal life in His soon-coming Kingdom.
- in ourselves as capable of applying in our own lives the precepts and principles taught in the Word of God, in this way perfecting that high quality of moral character which God has promised to recompense with life eternal in His heavenly Kingdom on earth.
- in the promise of God, that a new age is coming—is near—when the earth shall be filled with His glory, His people, and God's will be done here as it is now done in heaven.

Soon-coming events ...

The Herald and the KING

OUR PLANET will soon witness the greatest events in its history. For centuries God has been silent. But that silence will soon be broken by the arrival of Elijah the prophet, who comes to herald the Second Advent of Jesus Christ. "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).

Then shall follow the King of kings and Lord of lords, to begin His momentous work of transforming our world into the glorious and eternal Kingdom of God.

The Bible pictures all events, all men and all nations moving together toward this one God-ordained climax, when "the kingdoms of this world" will become "the kingdoms of our Lord, and of his Christ" (Rev. 11:15), a kingdom in which all who live will enjoy the blessings of peace, equity and prosperity. When the task is complete, our earth shall be numbered among the heavenly, glorified worlds and filled with immortal inhabitants, bringing to reality the promise of our Lord in His prayer: "Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven."

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Megiddo Message

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Building On Bedrock

"Watch how you build, because the storms will come, and only the house on the Rock will stand."

—Jesus (Matt. 7:24-25, paraphrased)

A man who happened to be in southern California during an earthquake told his experience. "I had just flown from North Carolina to California. Still on eastern time, I woke up early in the morning, when all of a sudden everything began to shake. I don't know if you have ever been through an earthquake, but it is frightening because there is no fixed point of reference. Everything is moving. I was in the Sheraton Hotel, on the eleventh floor, in a corner room, and it seemed like the whole room was moving, that the whole hotel was shaking back and forth. It seemed like it lasted a long time, though it was really only a few seconds. But I just felt as though the building would split and I would go flying off onto the freeway below.

"Sometime later," the man continues, "I was talking with a resident of the area about the earthquake. 'How do these high buildings stand through an earthquake, when so many lower ones collapse?' I asked. He told me something very interesting. 'There are two building requirements here,' he said. 'First, these high-rise buildings are prestressed. That means that they give and take in the joints, so that when there is stress they can move back and forth without crumbling. The twentieth or twenty-second floor may be moving as much as 20 or 30 feet back and forth at the height of an earthquake. But it does not fall, because of the way it is built. The other reason,' he went on, 'is that every building here

must have its foundation all the way down to bedrock. I mean all the way. They have to really go down to bedrock."

Here is a tremendous parable of the Christian life: building on bedrock.

"Other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ" (I Cor. 3:11). In these powerful words the apostle Paul stated the same simple, yet solid fact: That the Gospel of God has certain very exact and limiting stipulations. *All* buildings, to be accepted by God, must be built upon a proper foundation. No man, however seemingly qualified, can design or lay a foundation of his own. For *"Other foundation can no man lay than that is laid."*

Paul in his letter to the Ephesians tells something about the composition of this special foundation. We read: *"Now therefore ye are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellow-citizens with the saints, and of the household of God; And are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner stone"* (Eph. 2:19-20). The composition of this foundation is clear: It is the words of the prophets, apostles, and Jesus Christ Himself. Here is another description of the same foundation which Paul had called "Jesus Christ," a term which he used at times to represent the entire system of Divine knowledge.

Jesus talked about this same foundation, calling it *petra*, the mighty rock upon which His church is built, and upon

which it stands unshakable. *"Upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of hell [death, the grave] shall not prevail against it"* (Matt. 16:18).

The apostle Paul spoke again of this "rock" as that "spiritual rock" which followed the Israelites all through the wilderness, *"and that Rock was Christ"* (I Cor. 10:4). Here is the same solid rock, the mighty foundation, the massive wisdom of God. If we follow the Scripture rule of comparing spiritual things with spiritual (I Cor. 2:13), we find this "spiritual rock" represents a "spiritual Christ," which follows logically because we know that the literal Christ was not existing in the time of Moses. In speaking of this "Christ" Paul referred to much more than the man Christ; he was thinking of the comprehensive plan of God which was in existence even in the time of Moses, and which served as a "spiritual rock" to the Israelites who wished to build upon it.

In Romans 10, Paul discussed the same spiritual Christ, the knowledge of God, the wisdom from above. He writes: *"Say not in thine heart, Who shall ascend into heaven? (that is, to bring Christ down from above:) Or, who shall descend into the deep? (that is, to bring up Christ again from the dead.) But what saith it? The word is nigh thee, even in thy mouth, and in thy heart: that is, the word of faith, which we preach"* (Rom. 10:6-8). Not the man "Christ" but "the word...is nigh thee, even in thy mouth, and in thy heart: that is, the word of faith, which we preach," that word of life which the man Christ lived so completely that He could be identified with it. Again this is the solid foundation on which we stand, the whole law of God, which Paul did not shun to declare to his brethren (Acts 20:27).

But we still do not have a complete definition of this foundation which is Christ. What more can we learn about it? What of its composition, its central core? Were we to ask this question of popular religious teachers today, we would learn that it is indeed the man Christ, whose righteousness we can claim. But—strangely—Jesus Himself said nothing

about this "core" teaching of all Christendom. On the contrary, He provided quite another answer.

A Gospel of Hear AND Do

In His very first sermon, Jesus talked about this special foundation, in terms which no one could fail to understand. The solid bedrock which is the foundation of all true faith is, according to Jesus, nothing more or less than "hearing and doing" the Gospel He taught. Obedience is the core.

Jesus makes the point as clearly as words can say it. He is drawing near the end of what is commonly called the Sermon on the Mount, and He wants to drive home the vital lesson that the best sermon or the best teaching is utterly worthless unless lived. Yes, His hearers were thrilled to hear Him teach, for He spake as never man spake (John 7:46). *"They were astonished at his doctrine,"* and that He taught with such authority. But simply bearing Him preach meant nothing at all. No truth, however compelling, however thrilling, however elevating is of any value unless *applied*, unless it is used to change and remold human nature into Divine character. Here is the core teaching, the fundamental principle of the bedrock He represented. Every wise builder must build on this one foundation of *hearing and doing*. Here is the mighty supporting bedrock of truth.

Accordingly, Jesus' parable has two characters. Both hear the same message, but only one obeys it. And we should mark well the differences that result. *"Therefore whosoever heareth these sayings of mine, and doeth them, I will liken him unto a wise man, which built his house upon a rock: And the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house; and it fell not: for it was founded upon a rock"* (Matt. 7:24-25). Here is

Jesus was a realist. He was saying in effect, *You have heard My Gospel, now go to work; build a life, a character, a destiny.*

How important that we build on the proper foundation—and the only way is by hearing and doing.

the first character. The second, from all appearances, is just like the first—with one difference: This man hears, and does nothing about it. *"And every one that beareth these sayings of mine, and doeth them not, shall be likened unto a foolish man, which built his house upon the sand: And the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house; and it fell: and great was the fall of it"* (Matt. 7:26-27).

Jesus was a realist. He was saying in effect, *You have heard My Gospel, now go to work; build a life, a character, a destiny.* But watch how you build, because the weather will change, the storms will come, the great tests of life.

And those storms will tell how well—or how poorly—you have built. The storms will tell how deep your conviction, how well grounded your hope, how secure your faith. And only that faith will stand that is coupled with obedience. *"Whosoever beareth these sayings of mine and doeth them"*—only he will be able to stand.

To believe and build—even to build well—is not to become immune to the temptations, the hostilities, the fears and failures and sicknesses and all the problems of this world, but to be strong enough to stand *in spite of them*. Most important of all, the house built on this solid rock of hearing and doing will be able to stand the test of the *final* Judgment, that greatest of all storms which will sweep away all structures not solidly grounded on rock, the bedrock of faith and obedience.

Who is wise? *Who* is foolish? The two look very much alike while the building is going on. Quite naturally you *assume* that both are building on a good foundation. But what you see is only the superstructure; the storm will tell which is built on bedrock.

Is it not a powerful lesson for us? How important that we build on the

proper foundation—and the only way to do it is by hearing *and* doing. This is the point which separates the true Gospel from all counterfeits, the pure and genuine from all inferior substitutes. The point is too clear to gainsay, and too weighty to overlook because the source is Jesus Himself: *"He that beareth my sayings and doeth them"*—hear *and* do.

James, the Lord's brother, spoke just as plainly when he wrote: *"Faith without works is dead"* (James 2:20). And what can a *dead faith* do to save anyone? Salvation is the whole point. Redemption from this body of mortality, life in the coming new Kingdom on earth—this is the goal of all our faith and all our building. We want something more than the present can offer, something more than can come to us by building on any man's foundation. We want to build a structure that can stand through eternity.

The apostle Paul made yet another point about this bedrock foundation. Writing to Timothy, he described it in these words: *"The foundation of God standeth sure, having this seal, The Lord knoweth them that are his. And, Let every one that nameth the name of Christ depart from iniquity"* (II Tim. 2:19). Note the two seals upon this solid foundation: First, that the Lord knows who are His. And second, this same bedrock stipulation: *"Let every one that nameth the name of Christ depart from iniquity."* Again, it is the Gospel of hearing *and* doing.

This was the point which distinguished our founder's search, when he found that no one can be saved apart from knowing and keeping every commandment of God. Faith must be applied. One must hear, and one must believe; but one must also *do*, live according to the law of God.

Here is the bedrock principle upon which we stand today, and is it not a mighty bulwark to our faith? Our distinction lies not in our believing that one ought to live a good life, or a holy life, or a separate life. Our point is that *our salvation depends upon our being obedient.* Each one of us will be saved

(Continued on page 18)



Lord, Give Me Vision!

*Lord, I am still learning how to walk.
I ask that You will walk beside me*

*Among the mundane,
the special,
the ordinary.*

*I know that I can worship You
Even as I press the busy street,
or plow the fields,
or work in the noisy factory.*

*I can exalt You
Even in the drudgery of toil,
Or in the tension-filled hours
of every day.*

*But You know, Lord,
That I need time to soar,
To see the beauties of this world
that speak of You:
To see mountaintops and colorful sunsets;
To hear majestic choirs
that sing Your praise;
To meditate on the profoundness of Your truth
and the unfathomable reaches of Your universes.*

*I need time to pray,
To mark the vertical dimension that turns my head
and my heart upward, above the dusty valleys
where I must work, struggle, suffer.*

*I ask not that You remove me from the valleys
or shelter me from danger:
I ask only that my heart and my imagination
Be enriched and inspired with
visions that transcend the commonplace;
With glimpses of that bright new world which
You have promised will be—
When all the kingdoms of this world become
The Kingdom of Your Son.*

*Grant me such visions of its grandeur
That may sanctify the earthly every hour
and make the dusty paths of life
radiant with Your light,
For Yours is the Kingdom and the power
and the glory forever. Amen.*

KNOWING THE FATHER

"O righteous Father, the world hath not known thee: but I have known thee, and these have known that thou hast sent me. And I have declared unto them thy name, and will declare it: that the love wherewith thou hast loved me may be in them, and I in them" — John 17:25-26.

*Are we
practicing
that perfect
obedience by
which we may
know God
and be known
by Him?*

When Jesus uttered these words, it was a declaration from earth's most illustrious Son to His heavenly Father, the high and lofty God who inhabiteth eternity. Having been taught about His Father from earliest childhood, learning from day to day the principles and precepts of the Hebrew prophets, the boy Jesus had grown to know His Father in one sense through the lore of these men who had been servants of His Father. They were men who had been sent, appointed, or called of God to further the knowledge of His plan among the children of men.

As Jesus grew to manhood and "increased in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and man," His acquaintance with His Father must have grown also. The primary means of communicating we are not told, whether it was through visions, or dreams, or impressions received and delivered by His mother Mary, or by direct word-conversations between heaven and earth, or by the ministration of angels, or by a combination of all of these. We are not told. We know only this: that Jesus came fully to *know* His Father. "O righteous Father, the world hath not known thee: but I have known thee," He said in this profound prayer He sent heavenward before He suffered. No doubt that night He recalled the exhilarating experience of hearing that heavenly voice some three years previous, at the time of His baptism, declaring to Him, "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased" (Matt. 3:17). What an impe-

tus to launch Him into His ministry in full confidence that now was indeed the time to do His Father's bidding.

An early event in His ministry of teaching and preaching was the selection of His apostles, men who were to accompany Him and share His work. Luke says of Christ and the Twelve that they went "throughout every city and village, preaching and showing the glad tidings of the kingdom of God" (Luke 8:1). For such a task they were carefully chosen—and only after Jesus had spent all night in communion with His Father. It could not be done otherwise, for had He not come to do the will of His Father? Was He not here because the Father had sent Him?

What were the glad tidings these appointed men were to teach? They were the same words of life which Jesus compressed into His first Sermon on the Mount. There He taught of meekness, of mercy, and of mourning for sin. He made known to them the blessedness of poverty of spirit, of persecution for righteousness' sake, of peacemaking and of purity, along with the blessedness of hungering and thirsting after righteousness.

That first sermon was the essence of the Gospel they were to disseminate. It was the heart of the gospel Jesus taught by parable and precept until that final night when, after talking extensively and earnestly with the Eleven He concluded by addressing His Father: "O righteous Father, the world hath not known thee: but I have known thee, and these have

known that thou hast sent me. And I have declared unto them thy name, and will declare it: that the love wherewith thou hast loved me may be in them, and I in them." What said He?

As a certain scholar has commented, "There are sentences, words and expressions in the twenty-six verses of John 17 which probably no one has ever unfolded completely....We have not the minds to do it."

But there are great truths which we *can* understand, or at least meditate upon.

Jesus' first task in life was to know His Father, to acquaint Himself with His Father's purposes, His principles, His plans. But full knowledge reaches even further than acquaintance. Jesus' loved Apostle told us, "*Hereby we do know that we know him, if we keep his commandments. He that saith, I know him, and keepeth not his commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him*" (1 John 2:3-4). These words would apply to Jesus no less than to His followers. By saying that He knew His Father, Jesus was saying that He had lived in obedience to all His Father's commandments, for "*He that saith I know him, and keepeth not his com-*

mandments, is a liar," and we know that Jesus told no lie. He *knew* His Father in the fullest meaning of the word.

What did Jesus say about His apostles at this point? Did they know His Father as Jesus knew Him? Jesus did not say this; He said only that they knew "*that thou hast sent me.*" They knew Jesus was genuine, they knew He was the Messiah, they knew He was true; but they did not yet know His Father as Jesus knew Him. They still had much to learn and experience before they could say they *knew* God.

And what of us? Can we say that we know God? Are we *learning* to know Him? Are we practicing that perfect obedience by which we may come at last to know Him and be known by Him? It is the challenge that comes with the call to follow Jesus, for Jesus *knew* His Father. At the beginning of His thirty-third year He could say, "*I have known thee.*" What knowledge! What attainment!

His next statement shows His work in behalf of His followers. "*And I have declared unto them thy name, and will declare it: that the love wherewith thou hast loved me may be in them, and I*

in them" (John 17:26). There was no selfishness in Jesus. He wished them to share the same love from the Father that He had received: "*That the love wherewith thou hast loved me may be in them.*" This would be possible, because He had "declared unto them [His Father's] name." The Psalmist, long prior to the Son's birth, had prophesied this: "*I will declare thy name unto my brethren: in the midst of the congregation will I praise thee*" (Ps. 22:22). The author of the book of Hebrews cites the fulfillment of this passage as of prime importance (Heb. 2:12). Jesus' declaring of His Father's name, His truth, His message of salvation, to His disciples *was* of primary importance; for how else could they have learned it? How else could they have known so that they could communicate it to others—and to us? The proclamation of the name of God was the declaring of the doctrine of God. Thus it was possible for the people who heard it to live according to the teaching appointed and approved by God: "*For all people will walk every one in the name of his god, and we will walk in the name of the Lord our God for ever and ever*" (Mic. 4:5). □

*Heavenly Father, we are grateful for the visions that capture
our imagination;
that call us to services that enlist our talents and resources;
for the strength and enthusiasm that enable us
to rise above our limitations
in fellowship with You.*

*In moments of stress and uncertainty
we seek Your guidance.*

*In hours of distress and affliction may we find patience
and courage in the promise that we shall not be tried
above that which we are able to bear,
and that all things will work for good to us
if truly called according to Your purpose.*

WHAT ABOUT THE MARK OF



The mark of the beast is drawn from a highly figurative portion of Scripture, the book of Revelation. The Bible does not tell us the meaning of its symbols, but a comparison with history reveals some striking parallels. Our concern must be that the conclusions we draw are in harmony with the general teachings of Scripture.

The Time...

First, what is the period of time of which the Revelator is speaking? John, in recording this revelation, identifies it as *"The Revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave unto him, to show unto his servants things which must shortly come to pass"* (Rev. 1:1), indicating that the prophecies of this book would belong to time future, i.e., after the time of writing. According to various sources, the book was written about A.D. 69 or 70, very close to the time of the destruction of Jerusalem. Since the writing of all Scripture had to be complete before the withdrawing of the Holy Spirit (because those writing Scripture were being directly aided by the Holy Spirit—see John 14:26; 16:13), the prophecies in Revelation must apply to events after the destruction of Jerusalem and the end of the first century.

The Beast...

At the beginning of Revelation 13, John sees *"a beast rise up out of*

the sea," having the appearance of a *"leopard, and his feet were as the feet of a bear; and his mouth as the mouth of a lion."* Present at the same time is "the dragon," identified elsewhere in Revelation as *"that old serpent, which is the Devil, and Satan,"* the power of sin and its agents (Rev. 12:9; 20:2). This dragon gives the beast *"his power, and his seat, and his great authority"* (Rev. 13:2). This "dragon" is active in all ages, right down to the time when Christ returns and sin is finally restrained by being cast into the "bottomless pit," there to remain for a thousand years (Rev. 20:1-2).

What Is the Beast?

The prophet Daniel saw in vision *"a fourth beast, dreadful and terrible, and strong exceedingly; and it had great iron teeth: it devoured and brake in pieces, and stamped the residue with the feet of it"* (Dan. 7:7). This fourth beast of Daniel's vision represented the power of Rome, exceedingly strong and ruthless in its domain. The beast in Revelation 13 seems to parallel Daniel's "fourth beast." Daniel's beast had a *"mouth speaking great things"* (in Revelation, the beast has a *"mouth as a mouth of a lion"*). Daniel's fourth beast had power to *"stamp the residue with the feet of it"*; Revelation speaks of the feet of the beast being *"as the feet of a bear."*

The civil power of the Roman state was strong for more than a thousand years, amply fulfilling the prophecy in Revelation.

Next John mentions a singular event: One of the heads of this beast suffers a serious wound—it is *"as it were wounded to death."* Then, almost miraculously, *"his deadly wound was healed: and all the world wondered after the beast"* (Rev. 13:3). What is this wound which was suffered by the civil power of Rome? We do not know, but one severe wound was the official collapse of the Roman Empire in 476 A.D. The power of the state was crippled, yet it did not cease to exist. The civil power continued in a weakened condition.

The next verse fits the analogy well: men *"worshipped the dragon"* [a visual representation of sin and all sinners] *which gave power unto the beast: and they worshipped the beast, saying, Who is like unto the beast? who is able to make war with him?"* (v. 4). The term "worshipped" seems especially appropriate to the religious organization (the Roman Church) which was gradually to assume civil as well as ecclesiastical authority.

How Long?

Rev. 13:5 confirms the comparison of this beast with the beast in Daniel's vision: *"And there was*

For the sake of clarity, all historical references in this article are from *The Story of Civilization*, Volume IV, "The Age of Faith," by Will Durant, published by Simon and Schuster, New York, 1950.

given unto him a mouth speaking great things and blasphemies; and power was given unto him to continue forty and two months." Here is revealed the length of time the beast would hold exclusive sway. Daniel gives us more details about this period of time, and says that during this time all true religion would be silenced, that there would be a complete departure from the faith.

The duration of the time prophesied is exactly the same in Daniel and in Revelation 13, though each uses different terms. The prophet Daniel spoke of it as "a time and times and the dividing of time" during which the beast "shall speak great words against the most High, and shall wear out the saints of the most High, and think to change times and laws" (Dan. 7:25). In Rev. 12:14 the same time period is defined as "time, and times, and half a time." In Rev. 11:2 it is stated again as "forty and two months," and in Rev. 11:3 and 12:6 it is called the "thousand two hundred and threescore days." All these terms refer to the same period of time, the apostasy from true religion.

How are they all equal? Prophetic periods are reckoned as 30 days to a month, 360 days to a year; hence "three and a half years," "forty and two months," and "a thousand two hundred and threescore days" are identical in length, or 1260 days. As for the "time, times, and a half," if a time represents one year, two times equals two years, and a half a time is half a year, for an aggregate of three and one-half years, or 1260 days. Prophetic time being reckoned a year for each day (Ezek. 4:6; Num. 14:33-34), we have 1260 years for the period during which the beast was to prevail.

Yet another detail in Revelation 13 identifies the meaning of the passage: "And it was given unto him [the beast] to make war with the saints, and to overcome them: and power was given him over all

kindreds, and tongues, and nations" (Rev. 13:7). These events were fulfilled precisely as predicted, the beast (the Roman civil power) overpowering the saints in a dramatic fulfillment of prophecy during the Dark Ages, until true religion was silenced and the beast held full sway—"over all kindreds, and tongues, and nations" (v. 7).

Another Beast

Then in Revelation 13:11 we are introduced to "another beast coming up out of the earth." This beast had a strange description; it had "two horns like a lamb, and he spake as a dragon." Descriptions both lamb-like and dragon-like suggest distinctly contradictory features. "And he exerciseth all the power of the first beast before him, and causeth the earth and them which dwell therein to worship the first beast, whose deadly wound was healed" (v. 12).

What could be the significance of the contrasting features? The new power, being religious, had some lamb-like qualities, offering the people peace and a good life, security and stability. The winsomeness of Christianity [so-called], in the words of the historian, "lay in its offering to the people faith rather than knowledge, art rather than science, beauty rather than truth. Men preferred it so. They suspected that no one could answer their questions; it was prudent, they felt, to take on faith the replies given with such quieting authoritativeness by the Church; they would have lost confidence in her had she ever admitted her fallibility."

But let no one be deceived—those lamb-like horns were still horns, sharp and able to hurt; and the same beast had the voice of a "dragon"—a voice of authority,

cruel and fierce. This second beast, though a religious power, exercised "all the power of the first beast before him," and caused "the earth and them which dwell therein to worship the first beast, whose deadly wound was healed." The Roman Papal authority, claiming full civil and political sovereignty, kept in place the civil power of pagan Rome.

Actually, Papal Rome was the power of the Roman State under a new guise. It was the Roman State combined with the apostate Christ-

HE SHALL SPEAK GREAT WORDS AGAINST THE MOST HIGH, AND SHALL WEAR OUT THE SAINTS OF THE MOST HIGH, AND THINK TO CHANGE TIMES AND LAWS."—DANIEL 7:25

ian Church, wielding both ecclesiastical and civil authority, and assuming total control.

Its effort to keep alive the power of pagan Rome as an object of universal veneration is described in the next verse as the Papal power compelling all to make an image to the first beast and then fall down before it. We read: "And he doeth great wonders,...saying to them that dwell on the earth, that they should make an image to the beast [pledge allegiance to the first beast, pagan Rome], which had the wound by a sword, and did live. And he [the second beast] had power to give life unto the image of the beast, that the image of the beast [the civil authority] should both speak, and cause that as many as would not worship the image of the beast should be killed" (vs. 13-15).

WHAT ABOUT THE MARK OF THE BEAST?

Church and State Combine

By what events in history were these prophecies fulfilled? Constantine was the first to be ruler of both the State and the Church, to claim both civil and political authority. Actually, the combining of authority solved a critical problem. In the Church, with its solid organizational structure, Constantine saw a means of adding strength to his

the cross, of provisions miraculously supplied and increased, of the sick made whole and the dead restored to life. The power of relics ran through these *Dialogues* but none more marvelous than the chains that were believed to have bound Peter and Paul; Gregory cherished these with adoration; he sent filings from them as presents to his friends." He had a surpassing imagination. "Many of our time," says Gregory, "...have often seen souls departing from the body."

The Church having exclusive right to interpret the Bible to the people, the people accepted what they were handed, whether fact or fantasy. Such was the religious authority claimed by the Church.

The complete secular authority of the Church was soon to follow. In the middle of the ninth century Nicholas I (858-867) came to power having had an exceptionally thorough

education in the long traditions of the Church. Starting from premises accepted by all Christians (so-called) at the time—that the Son of God had founded the Church by making Peter her first head, and that the Bishops of Rome inherited their power from Peter in direct line—Nicholas, says the historian, "concluded that the Pope, as God's representative on earth, should enjoy authority over all Christians—rulers as well as subjects.... Kings and archbishops could only hope that he would not take it too seriously. They were disappointed.... When he died, the power of the papacy was acknowledged more widely than ever before" (Durant, pp. 525-527).

Why the complete takeover by the papal power? Why did such an

authority pass willingly into the hands of the Church? It seemed at the time that the savage impulses of man could be controlled only by an ecclesiastically sanctioned moral code. And above all, the people needed a creed that could balance tribulation with hope, and redeem lives of toil and drudgery by messages of inspiring and ennobling significance. The Church sought to meet these needs, in the words of the historian, "with tremendous creations of doctrine, of the Virgin Mother and the suffering God, of the immortal soul destined to face a last judgment, to be damned to everlasting hell or saved in eternal bliss by the Church administering through her sacraments the divine grace earned by the Redeemer's death" (Durant, p. 732).

A Changed Church: Paganism Prevailed

The Church as it took control of the lives and destinies of men was no longer the Church of Jesus Christ, not by the farthest stretch of the imagination. It was a whole new organization, with new beliefs and new goals.

It is said that in every country to which Christianity spread it took on the qualities of that area. "In Ireland it became mystic, sentimental, individualistic, passionate; it adopted the fairies, the poetry, the wild and tender imagination of the Celt; the priests inherited the magic powers of the Druids and the myths of the Bards" (Durant, p. 531).

Says the historian further, "Paganism survived in the moral sense, as a joyous indulgence of natural appetite; as a religion it remained... accepted and transformed by an often indulgent Church. An intimate and trustful worship of saints replaced the cult of pagan gods, and satisfied the congenial polytheism of simple or poetic minds. Statues of Isis and Horus were renamed Mary and Jesus; the Roman Lupercalia and the Feast of the Purification of Isis

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weak and waning Empire. Those who succeeded him only continued what he had begun. Pope Gregory (540-604), a philosopher-theologian, according to the historian Durant, "deeply influenced and expressed the medieval mind.... He left behind him books of popular theology so rich in nonsense that one wonders whether the great administrator believed what he wrote, or merely wrote what he thought it well for simple and sinful souls to believe." For example, his writings offered as history the most amazing tales of the visions, prophecies, and miracles of Italy's holy men. In them "the reader learned of massive boulders moved by prayer, of the saint who could make himself invisible, of poisons rendered harmless by the sign of

became the Feast of Nativity; the Saturnalia were replaced by Christmas celebrations, the Floralia by Pentecost, the resurrection of Attis by the resurrection of Christ. Pagan altars were rededicated to Christian heroes; incense, lights, flowers, processions, vestments, hymns, which had pleased the people in older cults were domesticated and cleansed in the ritual of the Church.

"The Church...wisely accepted the inevitable developments of popular theology. She resisted, then used, then abused the cult of martyrs and relics. She opposed the worship of images and icons, and warned her faithful that these should be revered only as symbols; but the ardor of public feeling overcame these cautions. The Church denounced magic, astrology, and divination, but medieval like ancient literature, was full of them; soon people and priests would use the sign of the cross as a magic incantation to expel or drive away demons. The dream cures once sought in pagan temples could now be obtained in the sanctuary of saints Cosmas and Damian in Rome, and would soon be available at a hundred shrines. In such matters it was not the priests who corrupted the people, but the people who persuaded the priests" (Durant, p. 75).

The Mark of the Beast: Symbol of Compliance

The Revelator then says:

"And he causeth all, both small and great, rich and poor, free and bond, to receive a mark in their right hand, or in their foreheads: And that no man might buy or sell, save he that had the mark, or the name of the beast, or the number of his name" (Rev. 13:16-17). Were we to apply this passage to literal buying and selling, we would be violating the symbolic application of the text. But since we are talking about a Church with ecclesiastical and political power, what could be more fitting than to apply this merchandising to the publish-

ing and teaching of philosophies and religious doctrines? When the Church established itself with complete religious and secular authority, it compelled all to endorse its position on any point of belief or practice. No dissidents were tolerated. No one might *"buy or sell"* save he who had *"the mark of the beast,"* the endorsement of the Roman Church. The Church was assuming total control over the lives, minds, and destinies of its subjects.

In a symbolic sense, to subscribe to any of the teachings or practices of the beast is to bear the mark of the beast. It has been suggested that one who openly endorses and supports false teaching has the mark in his forehead; one who simply assents because threatened or to uphold policy is said to have the mark in his hand.

How far did the Roman power carry their ordinance that no one could *"buy or sell"* except he who had the mark of the beast? Between the tenth and fourteenth centuries this mandate was fiercely enforced. The Roman Church as the governing authority (the "other beast" of Revelation 13) was the instigator of the law, and gave power to the "first beast" (the secular arm, or local authorities) just as prophesied (v. 12) to carry out its wishes.

As would be expected, everyone was not willing to go along with the ideas taught, or to accept the total authority of the Church in all matters of belief and practice. Various groups and movements arose, denying the validity of such church teachings as purgatory, hell, prayer to the saints, transubstantiation, and the use of indulgences. The Church fought back by issuing more decrees that no lay persons

should possess Scriptural books or any vernacular translation which had not been examined and guaranteed by the Church. The Church also forbade all contrary ideas as heresy and a threat to her total grip—which they often were—under threat of banishment and confiscation of goods.

Heretical sects continued. In 1190, it is reported that Milan alone had 17 new religions. One group in particular, the Cathari believers, launched an active criticism of the Church. The Roman Church, they

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said, was the whore of Babylon, the clergy were a synagogue of Satan, the Pope was Antichrist. They openly laughed at indulgences and relics, called the churches "dens of thieves," and the Catholic priests "traitors, liars, and hypocrites." The movement was squelched, orthodoxy triumphed, and the Council of Narbonne (1229) again forbade the possession of any part of the Bible by lay persons.

At this point the Church ruled that all heresy should be punished with death, that any attack upon the Catholic faith was an offense against God Himself. Along with the orders of persecution, all property of offenders was confiscated by the Church, heirs were to be disinherited, and their children were to remain ineligible for any position of dignity unless they too denounced other heretics.

(Continued on page 26)

He left the lights on when he went away

There is a story of a little girl who once visited the home where Abraham Lincoln had lived. She had heard many things about this great man, who did so much for his people, and she was eager to see where he had lived. As they approached the home, the little girl noticed that lamps were burning inside the house, just as they had been years before when Lincoln had lived there. She said to her mother, "Mr. Lincoln left the lights on when he went away."

Eighty-two years and several generations have passed into eternity since our founder went away. And he, too, left the lights on—lights of knowledge and insight, lights of moral consciousness, lights of hope; lights which will, if we follow them, guide us all the way into the eternal Kingdom of God. How grateful we are that he left the lights on when he went away!

Our founder left lamps burning for us—but first he had to *light* them, for he arrived at a time when darkness covered the earth and gross darkness the people, fulfilling the words of the ancient prophet (Isa. 60:2).

What had happened? It was much the same as in the days of Amoz, the father of Hezekiah, when they closed the doors to the house of the Lord and put out the lights. Only this time, *all* true religion had been extinguished.

How did this come about?

After the time of Jesus and His apostles, it suited God's plan to withdraw visible support through the power of the Holy Spirit, which had given such strength and Divine authority to the young Church. No longer was there any direct revelation, or instruction from angels. No longer did anyone have the ability to miraculously "confirm the word" spoken. At the same time, God did not leave His people without instruction, for the written Word had been completed, so that any who wanted to know could learn.

But lacking open and visible direction, the Church suffered a twofold attack:

1) *From outside:* An intensified persecution, during which the government became the chief aggressor, branding Christians as disloyal and treating them as traitors to the state. Surviving Christians were forced

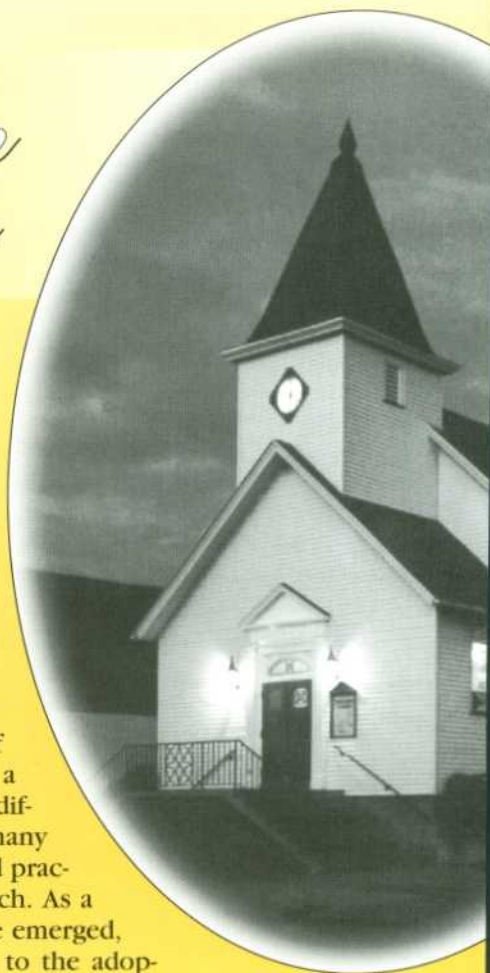
underground.

2) *From inside:*

New teachers in the churches who were trained in the schools of Greek and pagan philosophy, combined their background in philosophy with the simple teachings of Jesus, resulting in a completely new and different concept of many primary doctrines and practices within the Church. As a result, a new doctrine emerged, which eventually led to the adoption of the Nicene Creed. Altogether, they covered over the formerly clear teachings of Jesus with a combination of traditions and fables drawn from almost every pagan and superstitious source.

So thorough was this work that within a few centuries every principle of true teaching had been obliterated. The goodly structure of evidence was pulled down and covered up until there remained only a heap of rubble, as it were, under a barren mound of earth. Meanwhile, bishops, primates and every level of humankind trampled it under their feet. The officers of expediency and compromise responsible for the ruin presented this shapeless mass to uninformed multitudes as "the Church."

"Christianity did not destroy paganism; it adopted it. The Greek mind, dying, came to... life in a theology and liturgy of the Church; the Greek language, having reigned for centuries over philosophy, became the vehicle of Christian literature and rituals; the Greek mysteries passed down into the impressive mystery of the mass." (Will Durant, *The Story of Civilization* [New York: Simon and Schuster, 1944], 3:595.)





With the change in the teaching of the Church, persecution gradually subsided, and the Church grew in membership. But it was not the original Church that had been founded by Christ and His apostles. Now it was another Church, with new doctrines, new practices and new standards, none of which could be recognized by former believers.

This shocking condition was foreknown and foretold by the prophetic writers of Scripture. The apostle Paul, speaking of the return of Christ that should occur in the last days, stated, *"that day shall not come, except there come a falling away first"* (II Thess. 2:3). He also foretold that after his departure grievous wolves would enter in among the brethren, *"not sparing the flock"* (Acts 20:29). The prophet Isaiah foretold that *darkness would "cover the earth, and gross darkness the people"* (Isa. 60:2). This was the same condition to which Jesus referred in His Parable of the Ten Virgins. Speaking of Himself as the bridegroom, He stated that *"while the bridegroom tarried, they all slumbered and slept"* (Matt. 25:5). In other words, true religion lay dormant, asleep. In Revelation 11 this condition is described as two witnesses who were, in effect, dead. *"And their dead bodies [the two witnesses representing the Old and New Testament] shall lie in the street of the great city, ... And they of the people and kindreds and tongues and nations shall see their dead bodies three days and an half, and shall not suffer their dead bodies to be put in graves"* (verses 8-9).

These prophecies are given in symbolic language, but are confirmed in fact by history. Of the seventh century the historian Mosheim writes: "During this century true religion lay buried under a senseless mass of superstition, and was unable to raise her head."

Through twelve weary centuries of darkness, all that remained of the light was the Bible itself, in its covered and hidden state. There was neither honest desire to know nor inclination to practice its noble teachings. The lights were out.

To appreciate fully the genius necessary to re-discover and re-light the lamp of true knowledge would involve the review of numerous councils and decrees, modifications and adjustments, heresies and counterheresies. Add to these the speculations and writings of generations of monks, popes and

Light

O grant us light, that we may know
The wisdom Thou alone canst give;
That truth may guide where'er we go,
And virtue bless where'er we live.

O grant us light, that we may see
Where error lurks in human lore,
And turn our doubting minds to Thee,
And love Thy simple Word the more.

O grant us light, that we may learn
How dead is life from Thee apart;
How sure is joy for all who turn
To Thee an undivided heart.

O grant us light, in grief and pain,
To lift our burdened hearts above,
And count the very cross a gain,
And bless our Father's hidden love.

O grant us light, for soon or late
The things of earth will pass away
For Christ will come and bring to earth,
A glorious, bright and endless Day.

We Left the Lights On...

antipopes from the East and West, reformations and counter-reformations; in fact, every device that presumptuous men could employ to make religion conform to their own opinions. The result of this unwholesome process: confusion thrice confounded; a continual splitting of sects and re-subdividing of groups. And still, *"darkness covers the earth and gross darkness the people."*

But praise God, with all due appreciation to the life and work of Reverend L. T. Nichols, we are once again able to discover what is taught in Scripture, to know the light that gives life.

True religion sounds so simple. On the surface it seems to imply a mere designation of actual fact or of accuracy. But as used in connection with eternal realities, it has deeper significance. True religion is the Golden Rule exemplified. True religion not only means correct belief but it also means honesty and veracity; in its deepest and most significant definition it is the way to life, *eternal* life. True religion means ethics and principles combined in the forming of a character which God will reward with everlasting life in the coming Kingdom of Christ.

The Bible represents and teaches all of this. It is far more than purity of doctrine; it is holiness of character. Its ultimate is perfection of character. If all this be true, then to re-establish the edifice of Divine knowledge which stood in the days of Jesus constitutes the greatest event of the Age.

To re-light the lamps of Divine knowledge in the spiritual house of the Lord in these last days required more than a knowledge of Scripture. It took also an inner love of truth and virtue almost to the Divine standard. It took more than hours of research, more than poring over books, more than a thorough knowledge of literature. It took also a love and hunger for righteousness, and absolute integrity, and a superhuman faith that God was behind the effort and would see it through to a successful conclusion. It took also a whole-souled devotion to that truth until the inanimate printed page became absorbed by human flesh, rendering that knowledge animate, alive, active, vital in the re-creating of a mortal man in righteousness and true holiness.

This is the tribute we pay to our founder, the Reverend L. T. Nichols, for his life and work in our behalf. Now he is gone for a little while. But—praise God! He left the lights on when he went away.

What are the various lights which he left burning?

Lights of Knowledge and Insight

Proper knowledge lies at the very heart of the teaching of our Lord. While many church people today are open-

ly embarrassed to attest to their religious convictions and fear to risk their faith in open argument, if we would stand behind the teaching of the New Testament and its authors, we cannot emphasize too strongly the importance of right knowledge. In reality a more complete understanding is the best defense against skepticism. In the absence of correct knowledge, we have no solid foundation on which to stand, and are left at the mercy of whatever wind blows. Such can never be the foundation for true faith, or the way to salvation.

The New Testament never belittles knowledge. The heart of Jesus' last recorded prayer is, *"This is life eternal, that they may know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent"* (John 17:3). That they may know—learn—attest—affirm—be convinced. How can anyone know Jesus without knowledge of what He believed, what He taught, what He stood for? Jesus' lament over Jerusalem was that they did not know the things *"that make for peace"* (Luke 19:42, Weymouth).

Paul presented Jesus Christ as *"the wisdom of God"* (I Cor. 1:24). To Paul, knowledge was fundamental. Even as a child he spoke as a child, thought as a child, and understood as a child, upon reaching manhood he put away childish things and came to full knowledge; so also the Christian believer must grow and mature in knowledge (I Cor. 13:11).

Why did God provide apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors and teachers through the ages? Was it not for the *"edifying"* (instructing, teaching) of those who would compose the body or Church of Christ, until *"we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ"* (Eph. 4:11-13)? Correct knowledge was fundamental.

We today accept mathematical and scientific knowledge as fundamental. We need that same solid foundation for our religious beliefs. And that foundation must be just as provable, just as solid, just as certain as any mathematical formula. What should be its basis? the teachings of Scripture, the Word of God as revealed in the Bible. We today have no other source of Divine knowledge or instruction.

Our beliefs must not stand upon hearsay but upon actual knowledge of what has been recorded. And that knowledge must come from our own conviction, not from hand-me-down and hearsay acceptance. If we had heard about a certain person, what he had said and done, what he was like, we would probably form many opinions and prejudices about him. But this would be only a stage in our knowledge of that person, because we did not yet know him. Not until we had met him, talked with him in personal encounter, spent time with him, listened to him talk and asked him to answer our questions, and shared common interests with him—

only then could we say we "knew" that person. So with the Scriptures. We must personally involve ourselves in their message, take it to heart, let it influence our thinking and change our way of life, our attitudes and interests. Only then can we claim it as our own basis of faith and count our knowledge as sufficient to build upon.

All the accumulated speculations of the learned of all ages can never bring us to a correct knowledge of God except as we study it ourselves. That is why the Bible says, "*Study to show thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth*" (II Tim. 2:15). That is why Jesus said, "*Search the scriptures; for in them ye think ye have eternal life: and they are they which testify of me*" (John 5:39). We must search the Scriptures and let them search us before we can claim to know them.

The same is true of many other aspects of Bible teaching. We may talk about forgiveness of sins, or moral rectitude, or the deadly consequences of transgression. But all will mean little to us until we have let the Word change us, until we have let it move us to forgive another; or to repent of our own misconduct before God; or to take up our cross and follow Jesus. We may talk about the grace of God. But not until we have known that grace in our lives can the knowledge of it be any more than a "noisy gong or clanging cymbal" to us. And who is there who has not needed God's mercy?

How could Jesus speak with such certainty as to say, "*We speak that we do know, and testify that we have seen*"? (John 3:11). Only because He Himself was totally enveloped in the Word of life, and the Word of life in Him, so that He personified it by His daily life.

In Hebrews 5, the writer reproved his hearers for their lack of advancement in Divine knowledge. At a time when they should be qualified teachers of the law of God they still had need to be taught themselves. What was the problem? It was not that they were incompetent. They could learn, but the problem was they were not learning. Their ignorance betrayed their indifference. They had not put their faith to the test of experience. They had not set it to work for them. They were as children, "*unskilled in the word of righteousness*"—because they had not put it into practice.

Here is where our Founder left us the vital lesson: that knowledge must be applied; that faith must become skilled through daily practice; that character must be tested and tried. Here is the brightest lamp he lighted for us: that the only knowledge God approves is knowledge that is applied to transform our hearts and characters into the likeness of Christ.

And here is the searching judgment upon us: How articulate are we in our faith? Has our faith been put to the test of daily life? Or are we still unskilled in the word of righteousness? Are we still living on a nursery diet when we should be receiving the strong meat of the Word?

The Light of Moral Consciousness

One of the most essential lights of civilization is the light of moral consciousness, the beam that separates between night and day, between dark and light, between that which honors

My Light...My Way

*O Thou
To whose all-searching sight
The darkness shineth
As the light,
Search,
Prove my heart;
It pants for Thee.
O burst these bonds, and
Set it free!*

*Wash out its stains,
Refine its dross,
Teach me
to daily bear my cross,
Hallow each thought,
Let all within
Be clean,
As Thou, my Lord,
Art clean!*

*Saviour,
Where Thy steps I see,
Dauntless,
Untired,
I follow Thee.
O let Thy hand support me still,
And lead me to
Thy holy hill!*

*If rough and thorny be the way,
My strength
Proportion to my day;
Till toil,
And grief,
And pain shall cease
In joy and
Everlasting peace!*

We Left the Lights On...

God and that which dishonors Him.

Children do not instinctively know right from wrong. They must be taught, and it must be explained to them again and again until slowly a consciousness develops within them. Many questions will be settled for them only when they, as mature young men and women, actually confront the situations for which they have been prepared. This is normal, and we have a right to expect it.

But what about developing a moral consciousness in ourselves? for the Bible tells us that it is *"not in man that walketh to direct his steps"* (Jer. 10:23), that *"the heart is deceitful above all things and desperately wicked"* (Jer. 17:9); that *"every way of a man is right in his own eyes"* (Prov. 16:2)?

By acquiring a thorough knowledge of the Word of God, and by applying that knowledge to our lives, we can develop a moral consciousness, an ability to discern between what God calls good and what He calls evil. Hebrews says it is a matter of having *"our senses exercised"* (Heb. 5:14). Paul says that it is a matter of inner discernment: *"that your love may abound yet more and more in knowledge and in all judgment; that ye may approve things that are excellent; that ye may be sincere and without offence till the day of Christ"* (Phil. 1:9-10).

This fact throws light on Jesus' question, *"Why do you not judge for yourselves what is right?"* (Luke 12:57, NIV). In other words, we *can* learn to discern. Our founder taught us the importance of this discernment.

The goal of Christian faith is not moral automation, it is not blindly obeying detailed commands. Rather, it is a steady growth to maturity, as men and women who have by basic obedience trained themselves to distinguish between good and evil.

Growing in Christ means growing in moral sensitivity to right and wrong, not unlike the skilled eye of the artist or the practiced ear of the musician. We learn by doing. And only as we do what is right, only as we make the right decisions and the right choices, can we expect to be blessed of God.

Jesus told about the importance of a right moral consciousness when He said to Peter, *"And I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth shall be bound in heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven"* (Matt. 16:19). In other words, the same high standard of character which is allowed in the true Church on earth will be allowed in the new and heavenly realm. This is the light of moral consciousness which we must keep burning, the light of holy and

upright character which shines day in and day out, year in and year out for God and righteousness.

The Light of Hope

No light burning on earth has beams more intense or more penetrating than the light of hope. This is another lamp our founder lighted, and it shines today and will continue to shine until the New Day dawns and its glow is lost in the splendor of the dawn.

What is the light of hope? It is the reality of anticipating real life, real worthfulness, real pleasure, and real joy. And we do not say "real" without meaning—there is much of false joy, and false hope, and momentary pleasure. The real benefits will come with the New Age, when God shall *"wipe away all tears from their eyes"* (Rev. 21:4), when He shall send Jesus Christ with blessings far beyond what the human mind can even think or imagine.

What surpassing joy to know that after all the intervening centuries since the decline and defection of the Apostolic Church, the true light of Jesus Christ shines again! This is the light we hold, an identical reproduction of the light as it was in the first century.

Let us do our utmost to keep these lights burning until the New Day arrives, spreading its light from pole to pole and from sea to shining sea until all who live will know its joy and healing rays and the horrors of the night will be forgotten. Forever! □

Building On Bedrock

(Continued from page 6)

only if and as we hear and obey—because this is the only way to build on bedrock. All else will be swept away by the coming storm of Divine judgment.

This is the *only* way to obtain salvation. This is why we can sing it and mean it: "On Christ the solid rock I stand, All other ground is sinking sand"—*all* other. Any salvation which is predicated upon any other standard, condition, rite or ritual than hearing and doing the whole law of God is on the shifting sand of human reasoning and will not stand the coming test of Judgment.

When the storm of God's judgments strikes, we will be thankful if we built our house of character on the solid bedrock of hearing and doing. □



Discipline Pays

FOLLOWING GOD'S WAY ALWAYS BRINGS
HAPPINESS. AND DISCIPLINE IS GOD'S WAY.

While shopping one afternoon recently, I made a few observations which gave me something to think about.

A young mother was struggling with her two unruly children in the baked goods section of the supermarket. Despite her efforts to restrain him, Junior insisted on running ahead of her and pulling packages off the shelves. "Put those cookies back," she growled as he laid one package down and picked up another. Just then the other child, noticing that his mother was preoccupied, took the opportunity to dash away. "Johnny, get back here!" she shouted, but Johnny quickly disappeared around the nearest corner as though he hadn't heard. Their whole shopping trip seemed a battle of wills.

That's probably why I noticed another mother with her youngsters in the cereal section. There were four of them including a baby that rode contentedly in the cart. But there was no grabbing, no yelling, no "Johnny, get back here!" and no running around. Quietly the mother chose the items she wanted, and the youngsters delighted in helping her load the shopping cart. They were a picture of harmony and happiness.

What made the difference in the way the two sets of children behaved in the store that day? My mind turned to the Bible: "*Discipline your son, and he will give you peace;*" (Prov. 29:17, NIV).

Parents who make a sincere effort to instruct their children and kindly, lovingly, firmly teach them to obey, experience the delight of obedient children—instead of the discontent, frustration and frazzled nerves that follow the battle of wills. By teaching our children to obey when we speak quietly to them, we save ourselves the worry, embarrassment and struggle of the first mother I observed. Discipline makes all the difference.

Then I began to wonder: What kind of picture do I present to other shoppers when I must take my children with me? How about you? As Christian parents, we are responsible for our example.

But discipline does more than weed out unruly behavior in public places. It brings blessing in many areas of our day-to-day living. When we go to Church, or visit with Christian friends in our homes, don't we appreciate children who can participate quietly or entertain themselves without disturbing the peace of the other people present? Correcting our children's undesirable behavior whenever it appears will help to give us that assurance.

How much happier are all of us if our children can eat what has been prepared for them at mealtime without muss or fuss—instead of taking whatever they want whenever they want it. And we can know they are getting the foods they need to be healthy.

Bedtime, story-time, pick-up time and all those other "times" go so much more smoothly when children have learned to do what we tell them to do and we parents have been consistent in teaching them. Kind, consistent discipline also gives the child a sense of security and a feeling of satisfaction in knowing what is expected of him and doing it.

And did you ever stop to think that by correcting our children we may someday be able to save them from some real harm or danger? Suppose our three-year-old runs into the street into the path of an oncoming car. We call him to "Stop!" Is he used to obeying—and obeying instantly—when we speak? If he is, there is a good chance he will stop. But if he is used to finishing whatever he has made up his mind to do before he obeys, what will make him do any differently now?

Would we be free from the discord and frazzled nerves which plague so many parents today? Then let us take the Wise Man's words to heart and discipline our children kindly and consistently. Then we will be able to enjoy the harmony and peace which will result.

Following God's way always brings happiness. And discipline is God's way. □

“Study...Rightly Dividing the Word of Truth”

The Bible unstudied is a closed, sealed book, without benefit to its possessor.

But just any type of study is not beneficial either. To be properly understood, it must be properly approached—in the words of the apostle Paul, *rightly divided* (II Tim. 2:15).

The Bible contains many warnings about the proper study of Scripture. Improper study leads to improper conclusions, which leads eventually to disaster and hopelessness, as far as the purpose of Scripture is concerned. For incorrect knowledge cannot be the way to life, and the Bible states that “*all things that pertain unto life and godliness, [come] through the knowledge of him that hath called us to glory and virtue*” (II Pet. 1:2-3). All things that pertain unto life and godliness come through knowledge, and knowledge comes only through study; hence, the importance of correct study.

The apostle Paul warned about contaminated knowledge: “*Beware lest any man spoil you through philosophy and vain deceit, after the tradition of men, after the rudiments of the world, and not after Christ*” (Col. 2:8). Our conclusions about Scripture and its teaching must not be influenced by any human philosophies or traditions of this world. As this passage is translated in the New English Bible, “*Be on your guard; do not let your minds be captured by hollow and delusive speculations, based*

on traditions of man-made teaching and centered on the elemental spirits of the universe and not on Christ.”

Nor must we come to Scripture with any predrawn conclusions or assumptions that distort the message of Scripture or undermine its authority as the Word of God and its power to “*compel every human thought to surrender in obedience to Christ*” (II Cor. 10:5, NEB). For Scripture, we must remember, is not just another book by just another author. The Bible is the *written Word of God*, and we must respect it as such. If we do not, we do no harm to the Scriptures; but we seriously harm ourselves.

How to Study the Bible

• The right method

Zealous Bible believers have often told how many times they have “read the Bible through.” Reading through the Bible, while giving one a general overview, does little for one’s knowledge of Scripture teaching. To be understood, the Bible must be studied by subject, comparing all that its different authors say on a certain topic, “*here a little and there a little*” (Isa. 28:10).

Many modern-day scholars view the Bible as a product of progressive development, i.e., knowledge being gradually revealed over a long period of time, the full knowledge not being available until the Bible was completed.

The idea of progressive revelation is accepted almost universally, but it is not compatible with the plan of God, which

► *To be properly understood, the Word of God must be properly studied—“rightly divided.”*

is built upon the premise that each servant of God must be adequately informed of all essential aspects of the plan before commencing to serve God. If only a portion were known in the time of Adam, and a little more revealed in the time of Abraham, more in the time of Moses, still more in the time of the Prophets, etc., etc., we would have a situation where full knowledge would not be available except to those at the very end of the period of revelation.

In contrast to this, when we study the Bible we find an overview of the plan of God in the very first chapters of the first book, the meaning of which is expounded all through the pages of the Bible. This situation has only one answer: that there was one Divine Author overseeing the whole, for the career of no human writer could span 1500 years and maintain complete knowledge and control of the writing.

• **The right motive/purpose**

Our purpose in studying the Bible must be twofold: 1) to establish a solid foundation for our faith; and 2) to learn what we must do to obtain eternal salvation. If we study merely to obtain knowledge, or for any self-promoting purpose, we cannot expect the Scriptures to meet our need.

• **The right approach**

Perhaps one of the most critical factors in a successful study of the Bible is one's approach. If we study the Bible with firmly established convictions (pre-assumptions) of what it teaches, we will be trying to read our ideas into it. This approach is certain to fail. First of all, it lacks the open-minded honesty which is necessary to discern between truth and error. And second, such a mind is closed to evidence, however clear it may be.

In our approach to Scripture we must be seeking harmony, not disharmony. A thousand people studying the Bible can draw a thousand interpretations. We must be careful in our approach to Scripture that we seek first the overall, plain teachings it has for us, then try to find what is lacking in our understanding when a certain passage

seems to conflict. (We will discuss the handling of problems and seeming discrepancies later.)

• **The right guidelines**

One of the most fundamental rules in studying Scripture is given by the apostle Paul in I Corinthians 2:13, that we must compare "*spiritual things with spiritual*." Every sentence in Scripture is not meant to be understood in its literal sense, anymore than every point in ancient and modern literature can be taken literally. The use of symbolic and figurative language is common in all literature and must not be allowed to confuse interpretations. The dividing line is often difficult to establish, but we must remember that we will be much more successful if we remember the rule to compare "*spiritual with spiritual*," and not interpret any passage as being partly literal and partly spiritual.

For example, take Jesus' Parable of the Wheat and the Tares. Literal wheat may grow with literal tares. But literal wheat cannot grow with spiritual tares (understood to be a symbol of wicked men and women). Likewise, literal fire can devour literal tares. But literal fire cannot devour spiritual tares. Hence, if we have spiritual tares we must have spiritual fire (not literal hellfire, but fire as a symbol of destruction).

Strict following of this guideline avoids endless confusion and misunderstanding.

Bible Study: Accepting the Evidence

To be successful in our study of Scripture, we must have minds ready to accept the evidence, and be open to conviction.

At the same time we must discern between evidence which is not really evidence at all, and evidence which is reliable. We would not want to build our faith on a tradition which had been passed down through many generations, if there was no evidence to support the tradition. For example, there might be a belief within a family that a certain great grandparent had seen a vision of angels. Before we believe this

In our approach to Scripture we must be seeking harmony, not disharmony.

► *We have no reason not to accept the Biblical testimonies of the witnesses of Jesus' ministry.*

to be a fact, we must have more than the family's rehearsing of the event. If the Bible says that such is possible, then we can open our minds to believe it. But if in studying the Bible we find such an event is outside the range of possibility, we must reject it.

We must also be realistic in setting our expectations for evidence. For example, we should not be disappointed that the civil governments in the days of the Apostles do not record more of the Apostles' preaching and teaching. Nor should we be surprised that the conquests of certain of Israel's kings are not recorded in the annals of her enemies (i.e., the Philistines or the Moabites). In general, we cannot expect the records of civil governments to verify Scripture writings. What would persons in government have had to do with the writings of the Hebrew Prophets, for example? Or what interest would a foreign government have in recording an exploit in Israel, especially if their own country was defeated? (It is a well known fact of history that governments often recorded only their victories, not their defeats.)

Nor can we expect to read about the calling of Isaiah the prophet to the ministry in the memoirs of the Pharaoh of Egypt. Isaiah was functioning in a different land, and Egyptian writers would have had no access to the information about Isaiah, much less any interest in it. We must keep in mind the patterns of history and where and how God's servants were living, and seek information from logical sources.

Reliable Sources of Evidence

What shall we consider reliable sources of evidence?

• ***The Testimony of Witnesses***

We must accept as of highest value the testimony of competent witnesses, those who saw and heard events as they happened, and recorded their witness.

Here is the normal procedure in the study of history. For example, we accept as fact that wars between cer-

tain Greek city states of ancient history actually occurred because we have accounts written by people who lived at the time, who were witness to these events.

We accept the history of the founding of our nation on the same basis. No one living today saw the Thirteen Colonies set up their governments. But we have writings from those who were active in those colonial governments, and volumes of documented information. Furthermore, we have no reason not to believe that our present government was preceded by the governments of the Thirteen Colonies.

If we take the same approach in our study of the Bible, we accept the testimony of those who were present, i.e., those who heard the preaching of Jesus and His Apostles, and we accept the messages that have been conveyed to us through their writings or others of their time. We have no reason *not* to accept these testimonies. True, we cannot compare their testimonies with those of people outside the faith, because the secular world was not informed of what was happening in Christian circles. Neither can we compare the testimonies of those who were present with what we have experienced in our day, on a historical basis, as though we should be able to duplicate whatever occurred then. Such an approach would be illogical, and would make human rationalism superior to the Bible, thus removing all solid ground for faith in God and His work. Such an approach would say that we know all the limits and possibilities, and we are in a position to judge God and His ability—a position absolutely beyond reason.

In studying the Bible, we are responsible for finding out what God has written for our instruction, and accepting it as it is written and acting according to its mandates.

• ***The Testimony of Archaeology***

The findings of archaeology have demonstrated over the years that the Bible is absolutely true. Though very often their discoveries cannot be docu-

mented precisely without many years of study, nevertheless nothing has been found that contradicts any facts related in Scripture. And numerous findings have confirmed Scripture, even where other evidence was totally lacking.

Take, for example, the record of the Hittites. The critics of the Bible had, in the nineteenth century, established that since the Hittites were mentioned only in the Bible and there was no reference to them in any other known ancient history, the Bible was shown to be not really trustworthy, and it was probable that there had never been a great empire like the Hittites. In 1906, archaeologists began to dig at a place in southern Turkey, and they discovered a large Hittite library, with 10,000 clay tablets in it, all written in the Hittite language. After a long period of study, it was determined that there was one Hittite Empire around 1800 B.C., the strongest in the Mediterranean area; it declined for a period, then around 1200 B.C. it came back into power. So strong was the empire that the Pharaoh of Egypt was interested in making peace with the Hittites. One document uncovered by the archaeologists was a treaty made between a Hittite king and an Egyptian king, and two copies of the treaty were found—almost miraculously—one in Egypt, and one at the excavation site in southern Turkey.

The result: Bible statements about the Hittites are no longer challenged.

Another example of confirming archaeology is regarding the nation of Assyria. The third edition of the *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, published during the early 1800's, when criticism of the Bible was rife, stated categorically that the Assyrian Emperor King Sargon is mentioned in the Bible but that it is obviously an error, as there never was a King Sargon; that there is no record of Sargon in any other ancient records, and none of the lists of the Assyrian kings mentions Sargon.

In 1843, the archaeologists were digging near a city called Korsebab. And what did they find? Not only the palace of Sargon but his library, containing

thousands of clay tablets. A later edition of the *Encyclopaedia Britannica* said that there is more known about Sargon than about any other Assyrian ruler.

We do not claim to be authorities on archaeology, but we must not overlook it as a valuable source of evidence. We have not time to discuss its details, but only want to appreciate the confirmation it has given to the accuracy of Scripture.

Especially interesting is a comment of Cyrus Gordon, a Bible scholar who studied both higher criticism and Biblical archaeology. He writes:

"I was trained simultaneously in higher criticism and Biblical archaeology without at first realizing that the two points of view were mutually exclusive." The turning point in his thinking, he says, came after he left his academic career for a time during World War II. Returning to teaching, he taught a course in the Gilgamesh Epic. He writes: "In the eleventh tablet I could not help noting that the Babylonian account of the construction of the ark contains specifications in detail much like the Hebrew account of Noah's ark." At the same time he realized that higher critics have assigned a date of writing to Genesis of 500 or 600 B.C., "because," they say, "facts and figures such as those pertaining to the ark are characteristic" of that period. Then the obvious thought occurred to him: that if the Genesis account of the ark belongs to such a period on such grounds, then the Gilgamesh Epic must belong to the same period of time, because it contains a similar account of the ark—a statement which any scholar would consider "absurd." (The Gilgamesh Epic is one of some 20,000 tablets found in the area of Syria, Gilgamesh being the name of a legendary king of Sumer, who was likely a historical figure who lived in southern Mesopotamia about the end of the fourth or beginning of the third millennium B.C.).

Why not take evidence where we find it, accept it and believe it? □

(To Be Continued Next Issue)

*Biblical
archeology and
higher criticism
are mutually
exclusive.*



Plants that Perch

Did You Know...?

- ✓ ... that perching plants are designed to live without soil.
- ✓ ... that orchids grow two kinds of roots—one which anchors the plant to its host, and another which is designed like a sponge and collects water from rain and the humid air of the rain forest.
- ✓ ... that vanilla extract comes from the pods produced by the vanilla orchid.
- ✓ ... that vanilla orchids, when grown commercially away from their natural habitat, must be hand pollinated, lacking the necessary insects.
- ✓ ... that some perching plants, having no roots in the soil, drop aerial roots to a nearby stream and pipe water back to the plant, sometimes as much as 60 feet.
- ✓ ... that some orchids release just the right fragrance at just the right time of day or night to attract the right insect to pollinate it.
- ✓ ... that orchid seeds are like dust—because the germinating orchid does not depend on the seed for its food supply.
- ✓ ... that to grow many orchids requires the help of thread-like fungi which soak up water and carry it into the orchid roots.
- ✓ ... that orchid seeds which are very tiny must be blown where the right fungi are at hand to hold them in place and help them take in water so they can germinate.
- ✓ ... that bromeliads have “tanks” that may hold several quarts of water and provide a home for insect larvae, tadpoles and even crabs.
- ✓ ... that Spanish moss draped on trees and power lines throughout the South is an epiphyte.

Tropical regions, because of the very moist air, the frequent showers of rain, and the absence of frost, support very prolific vegetation. The tropical rain forest is the most complex environmental system on earth, with plant and animal life richer and far more diverse than any other type of forest. For example, a five-acre sample of rain forest may have 100 different trees, compared with 25 different species in the richest temperate North America forest. Varieties of birds may be compared on a similar scale, with a rain forest in Panama having perhaps 600 different bird species, while a similar area in the temperate forests of eastern United States may have only 100. And the number of bird species is very small compared with the number of insects.

Vegetation in the tropical rain forest is arranged in stories, or strata, often called A, B, C, D and E, A being the treetops and E being the ground level. Levels A and B together form what is called the forest canopy. Here, in this canopy, where exposure to sunlight is high and the temperature rises most during sunny weather, are found a proliferation of plants commonly called “air plants,” or perching plants; more precisely, epiphytes.

Epiphytes are...

Epiphytes are not a species or a family. They are a *type* of plant, singled out by how they obtain their food and moisture—in a very specialized way designed by our Creator.

The name is derived from two Greek words, *epi* meaning “upon” and *phyton* meaning “plant.” Epiphytes perch on the branches or limbs of other trees, like birds on a roost, entirely independent of their host except for support. They are not parasites. They do not, in most cases, harm their host, except by their sheer weight on the branches, or by usurping air and light from their host.

Now we want to observe how singularly this type of plant has been designed by our great Creator to survive in its unusual situation. For there are not just one or two epiphytes in the world—botanists have estimated that there may be 30,000 different epiphytes in a single rain forest. They are the clusters of ferns, the dangling cacti, the carpets of low growing shrubs and small trees, the clinging mosses and algae. The high humidity of their environment makes for their luxuriant growth.

What are the most common epiphytes?

Orchids far outnumber any other plant in having epiphyte varieties. The exact number of orchid species is not known, but someone has estimated that there are at least 20,000 species growing in the canopies of a forest in Central America alone. In their elevated homes, they assume a fantastic diversity of growth forms, from sprawling vines and dan-

gling, rope-like strands to bushy clumps with massive leaves and compact, mossy growths that carpet the upper tree limbs. A single tree in a Venezuelan rain forest disclosed 47 different species of resident orchids.

A widely known epiphyte is the vanilla orchid of Florida, which produces seed pods that are the source of natural vanilla flavoring. These vanilla orchids are grown commercially on various tropical islands. But in these areas, they must be hand pollinated because the insects normally pollinating this type of orchid are not present.

Another plant commonly growing as an epiphyte is the bromeliad (pronounced bro-me'-li-ad). Found almost exclusively in the tropics, bromeliads are mostly short-stemmed plants with stiff thick leaves rising in a rosette. The best known bromeliad is the pineapple, but the pineapple is not an epiphyte as it grows rooted in soil.

The strangler fig starts out as an epiphyte, sprouting from a seed deposited by birds high on tree limbs. The germinating seed sends a small sprig of leaves upward and thread-like aerial roots down toward the ground, where they

burrow into the soil. In a short time, these roots enclose the host trunk in a network of stout, woody roots that may kill it, leaving the strangler as an independent tree.

Trees in our temperate zone have as epiphytes only small plants



Strangler Fig

such as lichens, fungi, a few ferns, and Spanish moss. In the rain forests of the tropics, where the rainfall may be as much as 12 to 14

feet per year, and fogs and mists are common, perching plants are so numerous that the tree underneath is hardly recognizable. Because Europe has no tropical areas, early explorers to North America were not familiar with epiphytes. Columbus, arriving in the Caribbean area, commented in his diary about the unusual looking trees that "had several kinds of leaves"—perching plants.

How do epiphytes get water?

Epiphytes, because they have no roots, have been designed with other—unique—means of obtaining water. A few species send long aerial roots toward a nearby stream, then pipe the water back—sometimes as far as 60 feet (what law of evolution taught them to do this?).

Other epiphytes grow roots into the air, through which they absorb moisture directly from the humid atmosphere. Many orchids put out finger-like aerial roots tipped with "sponges" that collect water from the air. If more water is collected than the plant needs, the plant stores the excess in special water bulbs inside the plant. When water is in short supply, the plant draws from these reserves (did the plant devise this singular technique by itself?).

Some epiphytes, like desert plants, have waxy coatings on their leaves and stems to cut down on water loss (what feat of "chance" gave them this protection?) Others are equipped with very thick leaves to store water.

Some epiphyte ferns, clinging to the trunk of a tree, are able to catch and hold their water supply in cup- or pitcher-like bases. Bromeliads, perched high on tree limbs in the tropics, are veritable cisterns, their large bracket leaves overlapping to hold water. These cisterns vary in size from a few inches in diameter to as much as several feet across.

Bromeliads are distinctly adapted to the climates in which they grow. A variety that grows in full sun, for

instance, is equipped with a thick tough leaf with well-protected openings to insure minimum moisture loss. The types that grow deep in the forest have a small requirement for light but very large requirements for water and temperature. Varieties that grow high in the bare Andean Mountains require a maximum amount of light and have a tolerance for extreme summer-to-winter temperature cycles every 24 hours. The flowers of these plants have coverings over them like a dense mat of wool formed by finely divided scales, to protect the flower from the extreme weather changes. (Can we think that the plants developed these singular features by chance?)



Bromeliads on Branches

How do epiphytes get nutrients?

Here again is evidence of our Creator's handiwork. The same leaves that catch water also catch and hold debris, which decomposes to form humus that feeds the plant.

Certain epiphytes of the bromeliad family show outstanding evidence of design. These plants have large pores on their leaves through which the plant can absorb nutrients from the water it catches in its cup-shaped cisterns. These cisterns also contain a variety of animal life (frogs and their tadpoles, dragon flies, nymphs, katydids, insect larvae, mosquitos, and even crabs). When these animals die, they become fertilizer (food) for the plant.

Orchid seeds, tiny travelers

As remarkable as orchid flowers are, their dust-like seeds—so tiny that a single pod may contain mil-

lions—are one of the wonders of our Creator's design. Needing to travel hundreds of miles easily on the wings of the wind (so they can alight and begin life in a treetop), they are the lightest weight seed known. This is possible because they do not need a store of food—which is the largest part of other seeds. The seeds germinate with the aid of special fungi, which also provide essential nutrients. Is it not another wonder of our Creator's design?

How are orchids pollinated?

That depends on the type of plant. Most orchids have a convenient "landing strip," beautified with patterns of color to attract insects to the exact part of the flower where the work of pollination must be done. Since specific varieties of orchids depend on very specific insects to pollinate them, many orchids manufacture just the right fragrance to attract the right insect. (Did a certain orchid "try out" one fragrance after another to find the "right" one that would entice the needed insect?) Some offer sweet perfumes; still others, wanting to attract flies, smell like rotting meat.

Some orchids even time the release of their fra-

grance to the time of day that the right insects are out. (Did this come about by evolution?). Orchids to be pollinated by insects that fly by day release their perfume during daylight. Orchids that are pollinated only by night-flying moths release their perfume only at night. Other orchids vary their fragrance, offering lily of the valley perfume by night and a rose scent by day. According to a certain evolutionist, orchids have "a timed release factor that has developed over eons of time." (We wonder how the orchid survived during these eons until the "timed release factor" was perfected!)

Is it not a marvel of our Creator's handiwork? What can we say, but that "The hand that made them is Divine"! □

Scientific data in this article is from the *The Life of the Jungle*, by Paul W. Richards, published by McGraw Hill, New York; *Life Above the Jungle Floor*, by Donald Perry, published by Simon & Schuster, New York; *ABC's of Nature*, published by the Reader's Digest Association, Pleasantville, New York; "Orchid," in *Nature in America*, published by the Reader's Digest Association, Pleasantville, New York; and the *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, Fifteenth Edition, 13:814ff. and 17:1032ff.

WHAT ABOUT THE MARK OF THE BEAST?

(Continued from page 13)

The most rigorous code of suppression was enacted in 1220. Heretics condemned by the Church were to be delivered to the "secular arm"—the local authorities—and burned to death. If they recanted, they were to be let off with life imprisonment. All civil authorities were forced, on pain of being themselves indicted for heresy, to swear publicly "to exterminate, from the land subject to their obedience, all heretics who had been marked out by the Church for punishment."

With Pope Gregory and the Church's official legislation of 1224, the Church and state agreed that impenitent heresy was treason, and punishable with death. This placed the Inquisition officially under the control of the Popes. The purpose and scope of the Inquisition is best expressed by a Papal bull of Nicholas the Third (1280):

"We hereby excommunicate and anathematize all heretics...by whatever name they may be called. When condemned by the Church they shall be given over to the secular judge to be punished....If any, after being seized, repent and wish to do penance, they shall be imprisoned for life....They shall have no right of appeal....Whoever knows of heretics, or of those who hold secret meetings, or of those who do not conform in all respect to the orthodox faith,

shall make it known to his confessor, or to someone else who shall bring it to the knowledge of the bishop or the inquisitor."

The tortures and persecutions resulting from these decrees were horrible beyond description. Thousands of dissidents were burned at the stake, thousands more were tortured after confessing, in an effort to compel them to reveal other heretics. And it is said that the worst tragedies of the Inquisition were those concealed in the dungeons rather than brought to light at the stake.

Was not the Revelator's symbol of "the beast" appropriate to such fiercely inhuman conduct?

The persecution of heresy in Europe during the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries made the persecution of Christians by Romans in the first three centuries after Christ seem mild and humane. Says the historian, "We must rank the Inquisition among the darkest blots on the record of mankind, revealing a ferocity unknown in any beast" (Durant, p 784).

What was the result? The Inquisition postponed by about three centuries the uprisings against the Church and the translation of the Bible into the vernacular languages—and the spread of independent thought. Even so, progress could not be stopped; the minds of people could not be halted, and many sects, some heretical, survived in small areas of Europe, preparing the way for the Reformation, the rise of free thought, and the resurrection of true faith. □

*The shadows of the evening hours
Fall from the darkening sky;
Upon the fragrance of the flowers
The dews of evening lie.
Before Thy throne, O Lord of heaven,
We kneel at close of day;
Look on thy children from on high,
And bear us while we pray.—Selected*

*It's not the load that breaks you down—
it's the way you carry it.*

*If the going gets easy, better check to
make sure you aren't going downhill.*

*It requires neither wealth, education,
nor station to be agreeable and kind; it
pays in satisfaction a better dividend than
does a bank. Some suppose that kindness
is a form of weakness. Not so. It is a
virtue of the strong in character.*

Triumph is just "umph" added to "try."



*I wish I were great, oh, the good I would do!
I would use all my powers to help the work through.
Well, how do you know that you would, may I ask?
Just prove it by how you do each little task.*

Is It Worth Knowing?

(Continuation from Page 2)

ing him for his knowledge of *"the holy scriptures, which are able to make thee wise unto salvation"* (II Tim. 3:15). What higher knowledge could one seek? For here was knowledge that would lead to *salvation!* And it was already Timothy's prize possession. Is there any knowledge we might seek that could be of greater value than this?

What did Moses consider important for the people of his time to know? These are among his parting words of admonition: *"Set your hearts unto all the words which I testify among you this day, which ye shall command your children to observe to do, all the words of this law. For it is not a vain thing for you; because it is your life"* (Deut. 32:46-47). Here was *important* knowledge, knowledge that could give *life*.

We may think that we need at least to read the newspaper to keep up with current events. But how much is necessary? The Sunday paper for most large cities weighs several pounds—far more than is necessary for narrating current events. And there are, of

course, the six daily papers that arrive in between. How much of this information is useful? needful? beneficial to the striving Christian?

We need to consider carefully what we will feed our minds, much as we consider the food we give our bodies. We know that our bodies can use only a limited amount of food, hence we do not eat just any amount of just any food simply because it is available. The same is true of our minds. We must be selective and not allow unimportant items to clutter our minds. How we spend our time and minds is how we spend our lives.

The Psalmist tells us that the Lord *"taketh not pleasure in the legs of a man"* (Ps. 147:10) And we might add, neither is He impressed by how much we know about the various secular matters of our world, its people, its events, its heroes, its governors, its sciences, its cultures, etc., etc.

Paul gave good advice when he said, *"And now, brethren, all that rings true, all that commands reverence, and all that makes for right; all that is pure, all that is lovely, all that is gracious in the telling; wherever virtue and merit are found—let this be the argument of your thoughts"* (Phil. 4:8, Knox Bible).

How could we possibly find better than this? □



The Christian's Creed

HABAKKUK 3:17-18

*What though the labor of olives shall cease;
And though the fields do not yield their increase;
Yet we will trust in God; do His will;
Let His Rod guide us still;
And His law now fulfill—Yes!
Although disease and drought ruin the fold,
And only empty stalls we behold,
Yet we will never fear, but obey;
God is near, and His way
Is the best for us alway.*

*What though misfortune should visit us here,
And take away all that we may hold dear;
Yet we will press ahead, just the same,
Ever led by His Name,
For His law is the same—Yes!
Although our health and wealth pass in the night;
Our friends and loved ones all vanish from sight;
Yet we will face the foe unafraid,
With our mind on Him stayed,
God will still send us His aid.*

*So let the threatening hurricane roar;
Nor fear the waves that are pounding the shore.
For He who guides our bark knows the best;
Light, or dark, 'tis our test;
And in Him we will rest—Yes!
For God Almighty is able to save,
And e'en to ransom from death and the grave.
When we are in His care, naught can harm;
There's no cause for alarm.
Mighty to save is His arm.*

—L. L. Snyder