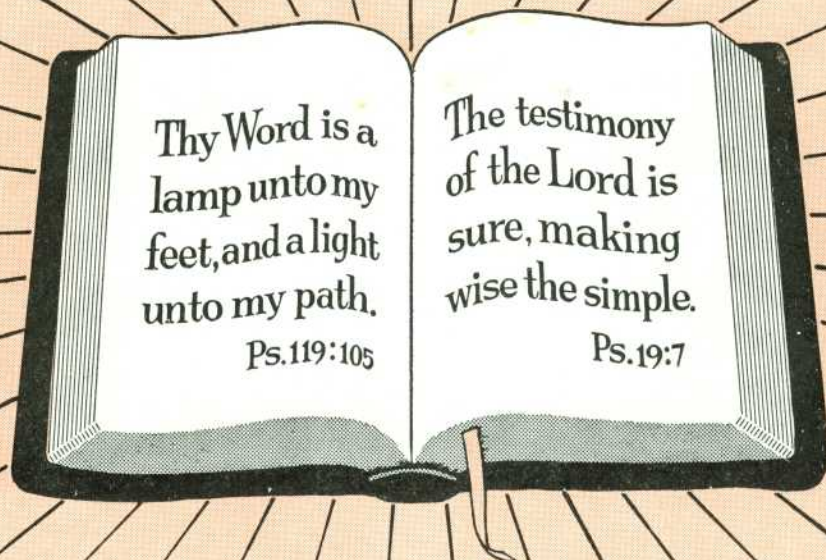


Megiddo Message

DEVOTED TO THE CAUSE OF CHRIST



Jesus and Paul Mistaken? | NO!

"Enviest Thou?"

The Upward Call

The Sabbath

Megiddo Message

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of Christ and published for the dissemina-
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Editorially Speaking...

He Gambled--and Lost

"**T**HOU FOOL, this night thy soul shall be required of thee: then whose shall those things be, which thou hast provided?" (Luke 12:20). This is the epitaph of a prosperous and successful man God called a fool for the following reasons:

1. **HE THOUGHT** that prosperity and abundance, the things he possessed were a gauge of success. He was rich, but not toward God.
2. **HE DIDN'T** know the brevity of life. He counted on "many years," but God said, "this night."
3. **HE THOUGHT** that "man lives by bread alone." He forgot that in God "we live, and move, and have our being" (Acts 17:28). He left God out, so God called him a fool.
4. **PROSPERITY** didn't make him grateful. He forgot that while man can plow, cultivate and plant, it is still God who gives the increase. He didn't appreciate the miracle of seed-time and harvest. And so God called him a fool.
5. **HE BUILT** his barns on sturdy foundations, but his spiritual house he built on his riches, his own philosophy, his material success, his own morality, his own self-righteousness. "And the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house; and it fell, for it was not founded upon a rock" (Matt. 7:25), the Rock of Divine Truth.
6. **HE PUT** his earthly profits in banks for that "rainy day," but he never gave thought to the treasure he should have been storing up in heaven. His treasures were all on earth; he was too busy to lay up a good foundation against the time to come, that he might lay hold on eternal life (I Tim. 6:19). And God called him a fool.
7. **HE HELD** the ownership view instead of the stewardship view. So God answered all his questions suddenly and unexpectedly, bought all his crops at one stroke, cashed in all his checks and foreclosed the mortgage on his life and called him a fool. "So is he that layeth up treasure for himself, and is not rich toward God" (Luke 12:21).

Take heed! Don't gamble with life and lose. Remember the man who intended to take his religion seriously at the "eleventh hour"—and lived only until the eighth! ●●

Jesus and Paul Mistaken? | NO!

The Apostles did NOT look for the immediate return of Jesus.

PRAYER

Now thank we all our God, with hearts and minds and voices. What have we, O Lord, that we have not received from Thee through countless channels? We would respond to Thine unlimited goodness with gratitude expressed in our words and worship and in our daily lives. We thank Thee that nothing has come to us, and nothing can come to us, that Thou canst not weave into Thy great design for our lives. We thank Thee, too, that Thou dost give us strength to equal every demand, and resources adequate for every task to which Thou callest us. With Thy true Church on earth and the hosts of immortals in heaven we give Thee praise.

Father, we rejoice to know that the weary centuries have worn away, and that the time of the apocalypse of Thy dear Son is now imminent. Divinely inspired He could foretell that it would be a long time before He would return to reckon with His servants and establish His Kingdom. Father, help us to long for that time to come, and to live in constant expectancy, ever aware of the need for haste, that the Master of the house may find us prepared to open to Him immediately.

May we not be among the foolish virgins who allow their faith-lamps to burn low or be extinguished because of an absence of the important oil of faith, but may we be among the wise who keep their faith supply adequate at all times. May we think faith, talk faith, act faith. May we always keep re-enforcing our faith, never allowing the corroding element of doubt to come in and weaken our determination to win life eternal.

For our country and our leaders we pray. Grant them such wisdom that all who lead us and all who follow may be wise to discover the ways of peace, justice and brotherhood.

Be with those in sickness, weakness, or pain. Bless all who are seeking to learn and live Thy holy precepts. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.

DISCOURSE

FOR CENTURIES infidel and skeptic have taught that Jesus and His apostles were deceived or mistaken or ignorant as to the time of Christ's return to earth; didn't the apostles look for the Kingdom to be set up in their day? Even professing Bible believers have said and are saying the same, as though puny man could challenge the wisdom of the Infinite!

In a work entitled, *The Unknown Bible*, published during the 1920's, we find this statement: "Primitive Christianity was characterized by an expectation of the parousia (second advent) of Jesus. . . . Our earliest gospel was composed some three decades after the death of Jesus. At first a biography of Jesus was not in demand. For the Lord would shortly be present. Those affiliating with the Christian group could be given the necessary facts orally. . . . The New Testament writings clearly indicate that the apostles and early Christians expected a personal, bodily, visible return of the Lord to establish His kingdom on the earth." These are the views of a teacher in a divinity school!

In the introduction to Dr. Moffatt's translation of the Bible is the following: "Jesus wrote nothing, and for a time his immediate disciples felt no impulse to write an account of him. A new age and order was expected at any moment. Jesus was to inaugurate this soon and suddenly. Why write a biography of one who was to reappear from heaven ere long? They were living in a brief interval between his earthly life and his return to complete the work of God, which would end the present order. . . . He had merely been withdrawn into heaven. Presently he would appear again to usher in that reign of God on earth which he had foretold and in a sense initiated." How strange that a scholar could translate the New Testament and still believe the apostles expected the imminent return of Christ.

According to a prominent minister, "The Apos-

What Is the Significance of Proclaiming the Nearness of the Kingdom?

TENSION... characterizes the unfolding of the history of salvation in the New Testament. The decisive event of the resurrection of Jesus Christ has already taken place; but the end has not yet arrived. This statement explains the New Testament conception of the present time, or, to put it more precisely, it enables us to understand the relation of present to future time...

"God uses time to fulfill his intention on the earth and for the earth. God is the Lord of time, of the past and the future as much as the present; we must therefore not attempt to usurp his Lordship with our computations of the date of the irruption of his kingdom. Let us remember, rather, the warning which is repeated often: 'Watch therefore, for you do not know on what day your Lord is coming' (Matt. 24:42). The master of the house does not know when the thief will come (Luke 12:39); the virgin does not know when the bridegroom will

come. Paul reiterates this in I Thessalonians 5:2: 'the day of the Lord comes like a thief in the night.' It is God who in his omnipotence and by his Word will fix and ordain the final moment (I Thess. 4:16)... The Kingdom will come from God alone, quite independently of human desires and actions. Human knowledge has no more access to this 'Day of the Lord' than human will. 'But of that day or that hour no one knows, not even the angels in heaven, nor the Son, but only the Father' (Mark 13:32). This verse is a clear and solemn declaration, and all the more important because it is stated elsewhere in the New Testament (Matt. 11:27) that none knows the Father truly except the Son. Nowhere is man's inability to fathom the divine mysteries stated with such force. How, in the face of such statements, have the sects been able to make the computation of the date of the coming of the kingdom the very centre of the hope of the New Testament? How have the exegetes and theologians been able to regard this point as the very essence of biblical eschatology? The error they have committed is unjustifiable.

tles were mistaken about the manner of his (Christ's) coming"! As an example he refers to the Epistle of James: "When you open the Epistle of James you find the author saying in the fifth chapter of the letter, 'Be patient, for the coming of the Lord draweth nigh.' That was his reason for being patient."

Albert Schweitzer in his final work, *The Kingdom of God and Primitive Christianity* (Seabury Press, 1968), attests the following: "Because of the death of Jesus and their belief in his resurrection, the Apostles and primitive Christian believers expected that the Kingdom would come immediately. It was delayed. They reconciled themselves to the fact that there was an interval between the event which should have meant its appearance and its actual coming, and continued to wait."

Says another modern author, "In the writings of the Apostles (Paul) we find no single eschatological system. His ideas in this respect were in a state of development." Was Paul, who had met the risen Christ Himself and been instructed by Him, uncertain as to the doctrine he was teaching?

The Transfiguration

Such are the reasonings of the scholars of our world; but there is much in the teachings of Jesus and the other New Testament authors to show that Christ's early return was *not* their belief.

A text often quoted in an effort to prove that Je-

sus expected to return in the first century is Matt. 16:27, 28. These verses are as follows:

"For the Son of man shall come in the glory of his Father with his angels; and then he shall reward every man according to his works. Verily I say unto you, There be some standing here, which shall not taste of death, till they see the Son of man coming in his kingdom." If Jesus had said no more, these texts would clearly teach that He would come to establish His kingdom during the lifetime of some who were standing there. But the statement is qualified: The two texts quoted complete chapter 16; chapter 17 continues:

"And after six days Jesus taketh Peter, James, and John his brother, and bringeth them up into an high mountain apart, and was transfigured before them: and his face did shine as the sun, and his raiment was white as the light. And, behold, there appeared unto them Moses and Elias talking with him. Then answered Peter, and said unto Jesus, Lord, it is good for us to be here: . . . While he yet spake, behold, a bright cloud overshadowed them: and behold a voice out of the cloud, which said, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased; hear ye him. And when the disciples heard it, they fell on their face, and were sore afraid. And Jesus came and touched them, and said, Arise, and be not afraid. And when they had lifted up their eyes, they saw no man, save Jesus only. And as they came down from the mountain, Jesus charged

"Nevertheless, it cannot be denied that at the beginning of and throughout the whole preaching of the gospel we are told: 'The Kingdom of God is at hand.' What does this sentence mean? Does it tie down the coming of the kingdom to a definite date or to an event in the history of salvation, the consummation of the Work of Christ? Does it simply mean that the kingdom will come in a given age and generation? If so, it would contradict all the other very explicit passages in the New Testament about our inability to know the date of the coming of the Kingdom. It is hardly likely that the fundamental point about the announcement of the imminence of the kingdom would be an indication of the moment of its irruption. . . . Do not let us forget in any case the overwhelming number of clear, explicit statements already quoted concerning the impossibility of knowing the date of the end. If we bear in mind the texts of which the meaning is perfectly clear we shall not attach unwarranted and exaggerated importance to the problem presented by controversial passages. . . .

"What, then, is the fundamental meaning of this

nearness of the kingdom which is reaffirmed so often in the gospel? It means that the kingdom has, in fact, drawn nearer with Christ, that time has made a bond with him in advance of the event, that with him we have entered the final period of time in the present world. 'The kingdom is at hand' means that it has come near (that is the exact meaning of the Greek perfect tense used in this sentence). The appearance of Christ is a decisive event in the time-table of the divine plan. We are in the final phase of the period, the duration of which we do not know. Thus the preaching of the nearness of the kingdom determines the present more than it characterizes the future. Such was in all probability the certainty which Jesus himself entertained. . . .

"According to the witness of the Synoptics, he certainly did see in his passion and death the fulfillment of his earthly work of preparation for the kingdom. . . ." ●●

Oscar Cullmann, *The Early Church*, Westminster Press, Philadelphia, 1956.

them, saying, Tell the vision to no man, until the Son of man be risen again from the dead."

These six words of Jesus explain the entire occurrence: "Tell the vision to no man." Some standing there saw the Son of man coming in His kingdom—but how? They saw it in vision, not in reality. In the vision Jesus was transfigured, or changed in figure before them. He appeared as the future King of the glorious Kingdom which He shall establish at His second coming. Moses, in the vision, represented those who pass through death and shall be resurrected at the time of Jesus' return. Elias, or Elijah, who is still living and shall never die, represented the faithful Christians who will be living when Christ comes. Peter, James and John, as observers, represented the mortal nations of the earth who will submit to the King of kings at His coming. It all was simply a *vision* of the Kingdom of God, when His will is done on earth as in Heaven.

The apostle Peter, who was present and witnessed this vision, could testify in his Second Epistle (1:16), "We have not followed cunningly devised fables, when we made known unto you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but were eyewitnesses of his majesty." He was an eyewitness of the Lord's majesty as it will be at His second appearing, as he saw in the vision his Master changed in figure. Peter had no idea of teaching that Christ was coming in his lifetime, or that he had already come the second time, for in his

First Epistle (5:4), he said, "When the chief Shepherd shall appear, ye shall receive a crown of glory that fadeth not away." When Christ, the chief Shepherd, shall appear (an event yet future at the time of Peter's writing), the reward or crown of glory shall be bestowed upon the faithful.

A Prophecy—Matthew 10:23

Another text quoted in an attempt to prove that Christ expected to "come" in that early day is found in Matthew 10:23. Jesus said, "But when they persecute you in this city, flee ye into another: for verily I say unto you, Ye shall not have gone over the cities of Israel, till the Son of man be come."

How would Jesus, the Son of man, come before they had gone over the cities of Israel?

One possibility: He would come *in vision*, as already explained (Matt. 17). Did we not read where Peter testified that he was an eyewitness of the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ, and how at that time there came a voice from heaven saying, "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased"? That may have been the coming to which Jesus referred.

Concerning the last half of Matt. 10:23, a commentator has this to say: "Had the Lord meant, as has been strangely suggested, that the final consummation would come before the end of the Apostles' tour, we should find the verse after verse 15,

and not here." Verse 15 reads: "Verily I say unto you, It shall be more tolerable for the land of Sodom and Gomorrha in the day of judgment, than for that city." Here is a clear reference to the time of His second coming.

Why should Jesus have spoken of coming back when as yet He had not gone away?

The above-mentioned commentator continues: "Matthew evidently understood it to mean that the Lord would in some sense 'come' before the evangelization to follow the ascension was complete." The use of the term "in some sense" does not assume a literal coming. This approach seems realistic.

The verses following contain injunctions to fearlessness—such as the apostles would need in the years to follow: the dreadful prospect of humiliation, loss, and persecution should not fill them with alarm, since as disciples of the Master and servants of the Lord, they could hardly expect better treatment than He Himself received. The true nature of His work will be revealed, and persecution end with the coming of the Kingdom. This may have been Jesus' thought.

The Apostles' Question

The question asked by the disciples at the time of Jesus' ascension, "Lord, wilt thou at this time restore again the kingdom to Israel?" (Acts 1:6), shows that at that time they were still uncertain as to the timing of events in that respect. Jesus had assured them that He as a nobleman must journey into a far country, even heaven itself, and that "after a long time" He would return to reckon with them (Matt. 25:19). In His historic sketch of the events of the ages (Matthew 24), He pictured a long series of events that must transpire before His return to earth; yet His closest followers, subject to the frailty of all humankind, had failed to comprehend what He had said.

Now Jesus gave them the assurance that they would know the answer to their question in the very near future. Acts 1:7, 8 reads: "And he said unto them, It is not for you to know the times or the seasons, which the Father hath put in his own power. But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Spirit is come upon you." The answer to this query, provided after the Holy Spirit had been given, pictures definitely a long period of time to intervene between Christ's first and second advents:

"Repent ye therefore, and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out, when the times of refreshing shall come from the presence of the Lord; and he shall send Jesus Christ, which before was preached unto you: whom the heaven must receive until the times of restitution of all things, which God hath spoken by the mouth of all his holy

prophets since the world began" (Acts 3:19—21).

Indeed, the people of the Apostolic Age *were* informed about the time of Christ's second coming. Christ would not return "until the times of restitution of all things," or as translated in the American Version, "until the time for the universal reformation of which God told in ancient times"—there was no universal reformation in the Apostles' day.

Furthermore, James' words at the time the apostles and elders had come together to discuss the matter of circumcision as applied to the Gentile believers, made it clear that they understood that a people must be taken from the Gentiles before the second coming of Christ could become a reality: "And after they had held their peace, James answered, saying, Men and brethren, hearken unto me: Simeon hath declared how God at the first did visit the Gentiles, to take out of them a people for his name. And to this agree the words of the prophets; as it is written, After this I will return, and will build again the tabernacle of David, which is fallen down; . . . that the residue of men might seek after the Lord, and all the Gentiles, upon whom my name is called" (Acts 15:13—17).

Be Patient—Why?

Some religious thinkers have deduced from James 5 that the author looked for the returning Christ in his day. "Be patient, for the coming of the Lord draweth nigh."

But what of the remainder of the chapter? What of the prophecy of the multiplied worthlessness of riches in the last days? "Go to now, ye rich men, weep and howl for your miseries that shall come upon you. . . . Your gold and silver is cankered; and the rust of them shall be a witness against you. . . . Ye have heaped treasure together for the last days." Here is prophecy unfulfilled at the time of James' writing. He is speaking of the last days of Gentile times, when the rich shall abound in wealth. Billionaires, multi-millionaires, even millionaires were unknown in the days of the apostles. But the author was looking ahead to the last days, when men should have heaped treasures together: "Ye have lived in pleasure on the earth and been wanton." But he cries, "Be patient therefore, brethren, unto the coming of the Lord. . . . Be ye also patient; stablish your hearts; for the coming of the Lord draweth nigh."

Was Peter Wrong?

Read II Peter 3:3, 4 and you will wonder how anyone could think this apostle believed Christ was

(Continued on page 19)

"Blessed Are the Pure in Heart"

IT WOULD probably be difficult to pick from among the constellation of Beatitudes the brightest star, but the challenge to perfect purity should make us stop, and think, and examine ourselves.

"Blessed are the pure in heart: for they shall see God."

Heart in the Bible usually means the whole personality. It involves mind and will, as well as emotion.

The word "pure" occurs 28 times in the New Testament, and it has a variety of usages, all of which have something to add to the meaning of this sixth beatitude for the Christian life.

1) Originally "pure" meant clean, and could, for instance, be used of soiled clothes which have been washed clean.

2) It is regularly used for corn which has been winnowed or sifted and cleansed of all chaff. In the same way it is used of an army which has been purged of all discontented, cowardly, unwilling and inefficient soldiers. It describes a force composed solely of first-class fighting men.

3) It very commonly appears in company with an adjective which means unmixed, unalloyed, unadulterated. It is used of milk or wine which is undiluted with water, or of metal which has in it no alloy.

So basically, pure means, unmixed, unadulterated, unalloyed. That is why this beatitude is so demanding. It could be translated:

Blessed is the man whose motives are always entirely unmixed, for that man shall see God.

It is only the pure in heart who can do even the finest actions from absolutely unmixed motives. If we give generously and liberally to some good cause, it may well be that there lingers in the depths of our hearts some contentment in basking in the sunshine of our own self-approval, some pleasure in the praise and thanks and credit which we will receive.

If we do some fine thing, which demands some sacrifice from us, it may be that we are not altogether free from the feeling that men will see something heroic in us, and that we may regard ourselves as a martyr. No one is entirely free from the danger of self-satisfaction for work well done. John Bunyan was told by someone that he had preached well that day. He replied sadly, "Yes, the

devil already told me that as I was coming down the pulpit steps."

This beatitude demands from us the most exacting self-examination. Is our work done from motives of service or from motives of pay? Is our service given from selfless motives or from motives of self-display?

Is the work we do in Church done for Christ or for our own prestige?

Is even our Church-going an attempt to meet God or a fulfilling of a habitual and conventional respectability?

Is even our prayer and our Bible reading engaged upon with the sincere desire to company with God, or because it gives us a pleasant feeling of superiority to feel that we do these things?

Is our religion a thing in which we are conscious of nothing so much as our need for God, or a thing in which we have comfortable thoughts of our own piety?

To examine our own motives is a daunting and a shaming thing, for there are few things in this world that we always do with completely unmixed motives.

"Blessed are the pure in heart." The phrase means, "Blessed are those who are right with God," "those who with singleness of mind try to do God's will." A proper inward attitude is just as vital as proper outward behavior. How many of us swing like a compass to the will of God? How many of us are thus "clear" in our intentions, and in inner desires are free from duplicity?

That which is pure is clean, so cleansed that it is fit to be brought into the presence of God and used in the service of God. Is this true of our hearts, our intents, our minds, our lives? The world is full of things which are soiled and sordid and shabby. The Christian's mind must be set on things that are pure; his thoughts so clean that they can stand even the scrutiny of God.

So, says Jesus, it is only the pure in heart who shall see God. It is a warning to remember, that, as by God's law we keep our hearts clean, or as by human lust we soil them, we are either fitting or unfitting ourselves some day to see God.

O the bliss of the man whose motives are absolutely pure, for that man will some day be able to see God! ●●

Good thoughts are blessed guests and should be heartily welcomed, well fed, and much sought after. Like rose leaves, they give out a sweet fragrance if laid up in the jar of memory.

The Upward Call



Scene V

Vision of the Future

The Biblical record closes with PAUL a prisoner in Rome "in his own hired house," where we have seen him in the past three scenes of the drama. Clement of Rome, who died A. D. 101, completes the record. According to him, PAUL was acquitted of the charges against him, which were more or less vague at best, and was active for a short time in the mission field, was again arrested and brought to Rome where he was martyred by order of the Emperor Nero, A. D. 67, or 68. This tradition may or may not be true, but there is nothing improbable in it, and we have chosen to follow it in the final scenes.

The great apostle, thinner and grayer, heavily fettered, sits in a gloomy dungeon, awaiting the Imperial verdict. There is a high, barred window at rear center. At left front, rising to the level of the corridor outside, is a short flight of stone steps, at the top of which is a heavy grated door. The only furnishings are a straw bunk, covered by a blanket, a stool, and a crude table.

In the uncertain light, PAUL is trying to read. The key grates in the lock, and the door swings inward, as the unseen JAILER'S voice is heard.

JAILER. A visitor for you, sir. [PAUL rises. RUFUS enters, carrying a small basket. He is a young man, evidently of Greek extraction.]

PAUL. Oh, good morning, Rufus. Or is it morning? I can hardly tell day from night in this cell, and I have no way of knowing the time of day.

RUFUS. It is afternoon, Brother Paul, a very hot afternoon. I have brought you some food which we hoped will tempt your appetite.

PAUL. [lifting cloth] All this—for me?

RUFUS. Yes, you know how Mother is.

PAUL. Ah, yes—your mother . . . and mine.* So many things she did for me, even back in Berea; and how much she has done ever since my coming to Rome. It was she who provided for me when I was penniless, after the shipwreck, and it was you people who helped me find a house. In fact, she paid my first month's rent herself. Throughout my first imprisonment she sent me food and comforts. How can I ever thank your family enough, Rufus? How can I repay you?

RUFUS. The thanks are on our side, Brother Paul, and we can never repay you. If you could know how good your face looked that day when we met you at Milo's tavern—

PAUL. Probably as good as yours looked to me. But I see you have a letter for me.

RUFUS. Yes, from Timothy. Go right ahead and read it; don't mind me.

PAUL. [after reading silently] It is mostly church business, Rufus. The church in Ephesus is having its troubles, with hearsay and backsliding, and ordinary human nature. Timothy has his hands full, poor lad.

RUFUS. How is his health?

PAUL. Much better. His visit to me last winter was too much for him, I fear. He says the church is praying daily for my release, but so far as I can

* "Salute Rufus chosen in the Lord, and his mother and mine" (Romans 16:13).

see, it does not appear to be God's will. We were both fortunate to escape the great persecution in which so many of our brethren died, but the end must come some time. I have filed an appeal, but the Emperor has no love for me since I converted one of his favorites. He took it personally, so I hear.

RUFUS. [*looking nervously about, in incipient claustrophobia*] How do you stand it in this awful place? I'd go mad.

PAUL. Oh, it could be worse. And, when all is said and done, what can I do about it? It is not much like the old house arrest days, of course. My jailer is kind, but he has his orders. The food is bad, but so is prison food the world over—at least I've found it so. Luke is permitted to see me every day, for which I am very thankful. The worst thing is the rats—there's one now! I am not complaining, but there is still so much to do and so little done. There are subversive forces to be fought in the churches. There are letters to be written. I wish I were two, so I could do more.

RUFUS. Do you have a light at night?

PAUL. No, it is not allowed. It is wearisome to sit in the dark, but I am thankful I have so much of the Word written in my mind so I can meditate to some profit, and plan my letters for the next day's writing when Luke comes.

RUFUS. Is there anything I can do for you, Brother Paul?

PAUL. [*rising and speaking very earnestly*] Yes, Rufus, there is. I know I shall not be with you long. As I face the end I have no fear for myself, for I have searched my heart and feel that my personal work is done. Now someone else must carry on. That someone is you, Rufus—you and all the brethren who love our Lord Jesus Christ.

The greatest comfort you can give me is your promise that you will be true to the faith, an example to the flock and a voice for Christ; that you will keep yourself pure and the church pure, so that we may all live together, world without end, in the future Kingdom of God. Will you promise me, Rufus? [*clasps his hands*].

RUFUS. [*solemnly*] Yes, Brother Paul, I will. For you, and for God, for my own salvation, and for the glory of the church of Christ, I will be true.

[*The door creaks open*].

JAILER. Time to go, sir.

RUFUS. Farewell, brother; I will see you again. [*Exit*]

The door closes. Paul paces a turn or two, then
December, 1971

sits on his bunk, reclining as weariness overcomes him. An ANGEL appears from right rear, in a shining white robe. PAUL rises, then kneels. The ANGEL raises him up.]

ANGEL. Fear not, Brother Paul. I am Gabriel, who stands in the presence of God, and I have come to strengthen you, for you are greatly beloved. Be of good courage, O servant of God. Be not afraid of what man can do to the mortal body, for your name is written in the Book of Life and no man can blot it out. Only a little longer to endure. Your rest shall be sweet and secure.

PAUL. [*eagerly*] Tell me—tell me, O Gabriel, what of my beloved churches when I am gone?

ANGEL. The church of God is stronger than the power of Imperial Rome, and in the end she shall triumph over all earthly powers and lay them in the dust. But as you have long known, there must first be bad times—very bad. The prophecies of old are moving toward their fulfillment; the mystery of iniquity is already working, and will work until the last witness is destroyed, and the Truth falls to earth, there to lie dead, as Daniel foretold, for a time, times, and a half—1,260 years of darkness.

PAUL. And then—?

ANGEL. Then life enters into it, and it stands upright, never again to fall! This will be in the last hour of the day, the last chapter in the plan of salvation. Then, very soon, comes the end, and the Kingdom of God.

PAUL. How will this be?

ANGEL. A great man, an excellent teacher, a faithful and wise servant, shall be raised up to perform this mighty work, in a land far beyond the great ocean, a land no man of this age knows. In a new world, where all men are free, the Truth shall be restored.

PAUL. By faith or by sight?

ANGEL. By faith alone. No vision, no miracle, no sight or voice of angels, but only the naked Word to guide him.

PAUL. A mighty work indeed, a work requiring a truly great man. Would that I could see and know him.

ANGEL. You *shall* see him at the Judgment, Paul, and enjoy his company through the ages of eternity. Is not this enough?

PAUL. It is enough. I can wait.

[*PAUL kneels as the ANGEL vanishes, and remains kneeling in prayer as the curtain falls.*]

NEXT ISSUE: "I Have Finished My Course."

"Enviest Thou?"

THE CONTINUAL grumbling of the children of Israel became almost too much for their great leader Moses. Shepherding the multitude through the wilderness was a strenuous task, even without the burden of all their faultfinding.

Moses prayed to God about the matter, and God told Moses to choose seventy men of the elders of Israel and have them meet with him at the tabernacle. God said He would take of the spirit which was in Moses and bestow it upon the seventy men, and they would help carry the burden of the people so that Moses would not have to bear it alone.

Moses chose the best men that he knew and sent word for them to meet at the tabernacle. He placed them around the tabernacle. It happened that two men did not arrive. Eldad and Medad were missing. But God acted as He had said, and took of the spirit that was upon Moses and gave it to the chosen men. Immediately they began to prophesy, to praise God, declaring His will and goodness to the people.

It happened that Eldad and Medad were still in the camp, but the spirit had also rested upon them, and they were prophesying there. A young man pressing through the crowd came running to Moses, reporting, "Eldad and Medad are prophesying in the camp." Joshua, Moses' servant from his youth, protested, "My master Moses, make them stop."

God had not forgotten the two men, even though they were not present. We are not told why they did not arrive at the tabernacle. Certainly it was not because they were rebellious. They must have been good men, or God would not have put His spirit upon them. Perhaps they were performing an act of mercy and were unable to leave. We do not know.

Joshua was disturbed over the matter. He was jealous for his master's prerogative and honor. He wanted these irregular doings stopped. He grudged to see the eyes of the people turned away from his master and turned toward Eldad and Medad.

To Joshua's words Moses gave this golden answer, "Enviest thou for my sake? Would God that all the Lord's people were prophets and that the Lord would put His spirit upon them." If Moses had ever been anxious about his personal glory, his answer to Joshua showed that he had schooled his own heart and his magnificent words proved the incomparable meekness and sweetness of his subdued

spirit. Moses loved and trusted Joshua, and Joshua honored Moses and was deeply loyal to him. He stood ready to run the great leader's errands and to set out with him on his hallowed expeditions. He was more than a son to him in the absence of his own sons. He went up with him on the mount, and "He departed not out of the tabernacle"—another remarkable testimony concerning the son of Nun. Nevertheless, this occasion brought out a defect in Joshua's finest quality. His loyalty was tainted. He envied the spiritual gifts of others.

God had not diminished the spirit of Moses. As a flame is not diminished by others being kindled by it, so God did not diminish the wisdom, energy and courage which distinguished Moses by endowing the seventy with His spirit. Moses shone splendidly in the warm rebuke he gave to his servant. And through the experiences of succeeding years, it is certain that Joshua profited from this noble lesson.

May we also profit by Moses' rebuke.

Would it help to ask ourselves betimes, "Enviest thou?" Though no one today possesses power from God, there are always Eldads and Medads in our midst, those who because of gifts or abilities we do not possess, stir the envious spirit, if we have not yet schooled our hearts as Moses had. The feeling of envy is deep and far-reaching. How eager human nature is to guard its own—*our* family, *our* home, *our* garden, *our* friends, *our* knowledge, *our* position. What or whomever we are involved with we do not like to see surpassed in any way.

However, if we would be truly loyal to God, every good cause we should defend, eagerly and willingly, in whom or wherever it may be. We should not be blinded by envy. Too often the spirit droops at the prosperity of another. Too often the friendly warmth of the eye changes to cool resentment. Too often we harbor suspicious fears of a rival. If we cannot love Eldad and Medad, our fellow-workers in the faith, how can we love God?

We should never seek exclusively the affection or attention of one person and be displeased to see another enjoy it. Rather, we should "seek him that maketh the seven stars and Orion, and turneth the shadow of death into the morning, . . . The Lord is his name" (Amos 5:8). Why are we concerned if God is our God, if He is the center of our life? What is sweeter and warmer than to be a friend of God?

All friends of God should have their hearts bound together in Christian love. Love and friendship in the house of God is a beautiful experience. May we never regard it carelessly. May it never be squelched by feelings of envy. If Eldad and Medad, our fellow-workers, should in some way excel us in the Lord and all eyes be turned on them, let us, like Moses, praise the Lord and desire a like blessing for all. ●●

Timely Topics

IN THIS modern age, more and newer articles are always being developed for manufacture, and in the toy industry there is no exception, especially in our country, which is the world's largest toy producer. Department stores, discount stores, dime stores—all have a large section set aside especially for the showing of toys. There are even stores which exclusively sell toys and games. And it would be difficult to find a child who is not drawn to the rows of heavily-laden shelves filled with all imaginable kinds of articles constructed for the amusement of the younger set. Many toys are copies

Toys,

Toys...

of larger objects, miniature replicas of things found in the adult world. There are sports equipment, educational and scientific toys, riding toys, handicraft materials, games and puzzles—the list is almost endless. And nowadays, in our modern society, the average child takes the ownership of such varied playthings for granted. In fact, parents take for granted the giving of numerous playthings to their children. Advertisements, especially on television, which are aimed at the young, always show newer and different types of toys, and help to keep children dissatisfied with what they have.

But parents, especially Christian parents, should ask themselves, Are all these toys really useful, or even necessary, for children to have? Are they essential to their growth, and what do the children learn from them? One of the parents' aims in raising children must be to guide their youngsters' interests in the proper direction. Even as they should be striving to obey the command to redeem the time (Eph. 5: 15, 16), so should they endeavor to instill this principle in their children's lives by seeing that the children's time is well spent. While it is true that there are many toys and games designed specifically to be valuable in the development and education of a child, the parents must know where to draw the line. Even in this aspect of life, they must learn to be guided by Christian wisdom, and practice the same economy they would in buying other items.

Having a lot of toys, of course, is not good for any child. Too many playthings can all too quickly

lead to boredom and frustration. While the ownership of toys can teach a child responsibility, being given too many leaves no room for the development of the child's appreciation.

A good rule to follow is to promise a child a toy as a reward for well-doing and for being obedient; then he will appreciate it more, and will not grow up expecting things to be handed to him simply by asking for them. Parents, and others, should have a right motive or reason for giving something to a child. It is good for a child to develop early the Christian virtue of wanting to work for a promised reward. These rewards can be things which would be useful in teaching the child to do his part in helping around the home and in the garden, or things which would be a definite aid in developing his mental abilities, or which would be beneficial to his physical exercise. And, of course, the Christian parent must avoid anything foolish, which would not be beneficial to the child's development, and which would be a waste of money.

A small variety of things should be enough to keep any child busy and happy. It must be remembered that children do not need to spend all their waking hours in play. Time should be given in letting them help in daily chores in any way they can. Especially during the toddler stage do they delight in being just like "mommy" or "daddy." This is a fine opportunity to start right in, giving them the chance to do any little jobs they are capable of.

There are many toys which can be made right at home, with little or no added expense. More often than not these will be the child's favorites, and will probably withstand the most use.

Anyone who takes the time to observe children will undoubtedly notice how happy and contented they can be with the simplest of articles. Even very young children love to entertain themselves with any kind of brightly-colored objects of different shapes and sizes, which can often be found right in the kitchen. If left to their own imaginations, children can devise all sorts of games.

Finally, it should be remembered that approximately the first six years of a child's life are the most formative, and lay the foundation for his entire lifetime. This is when the parents have their best opportunity for instilling the standards of the Christian way of life. Toys should never be a substitute for parental guidance and instruction. ●●

When you hear an evil report about anyone, halve it and quarter it, and then say nothing about the rest of it.

LETTERS

Concerning "Jesus Christ Superstar"

Receiving your magazine every month is a wonder in itself. I have read the Bible and believe in it, but I must truthfully say that your magazine explains to me clearly many things that I did not know. It is an inspiration in itself, which I enjoy reading very much and will continue on doing so.

Your article on "Jesus Christ Superstar" in the November issue I enjoyed reading because I recently took up a defense against this "rock opera" as you call it in your magazine.

My sister's son could not possibly believe why I am against this play, for he did not believe it was so bad. I had to tell him why and he still persisted otherwise. I did not get the Bible out, but I believe my persistence finally won out, but not altogether. He is graduating this year from a Catholic Grade School and is an altar boy for the church. Of course, I did not talk to his mother about our dissension, but I believe I am going to show him your article on this so called "Superstar" business. That is what I think it is, a business for profit making. If your article still does not convince him, then I believe I will have to talk to his mother and father about it. It's a pity that junk like this Superstar business can work itself into the minds of the young and distort them into believing in it. It seems that since our Church rules have changed some, it is confusing our young and together with this new generation fad, is causing them to lose their faith some, even though they probably don't even know it. I suppose it is for us adults to help them, especially like in their Superstar business. Of course, you and I know, according to the Prophecies, false teachings and false Prophets are still yet to come. What has to be done is to help our young and those who mistakingly fall for these false doctrines. Of course, that is expected of us anyway.

I wish to thank you and your staff for doing a great job and keep up the good work.

Baltimore, Maryland

A. F. F.

Living By Faith

Truly we are living in troublous times, as is manifest by the world around us. It is very difficult in my area to find someone of like conviction to visit with, especially about spiritual things.

If it were not for my faith in the Bible, the written Word of God, I think life would be quite meaningless. But as I read from day to day, sometimes at random, I am made to marvel at the wonderful precepts and the plan which God has ordained for mankind to come to perfection.

But the question arises: How can I ever attain to such glorious example set before me by our Lord? No wonder the great apostle Paul exclaimed, "O wretched man that I am! Who shall deliver me from the body of this death? I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord" (Rom. 7:24, 25).

I find that I am in a continual fight against self, and I am glad for a contact with the Megiddo Church. Their writings have allowed me the proper insight into the Scriptures that I might know and pursue the truth.

Thermopolis, Wyoming

J. A.

An Invaluable Help

I want to take this opportunity to tell you how thankful I am that I answered an advertisement some months ago and received from you a copy of the *Megiddo Message*. I subsequently ordered the set of eleven booklets covering various subjects, and I am a regular subscriber now to the *Megiddo Message*. All your literature has been an invaluable help to me in Bible study and in understanding the Bible. I, like many others, I am sure, had not been able to reconcile many historical and scientific facts with my understanding of the Bible. Now I do.

I have always had implicit faith and belief in God, but I am so much happier now that I understand better. Please keep up your wonderful monthly.

Knoxville, Maryland

J. B.

Few Today

I find that in my life each day that goes by is one day less and that one must be on his toes and spiritually wide awake. For the days are filled with much evil, and wickedness is great.

In this day and age there are but few who are willing to walk and live in the light and truth of God's holy Word. We have the words of our Lord, "Fear not, little flock," and He has promised never to leave or forsake His own. We have His promise, and that He will keep.

Lansing, Illinois

H. H.

Frosted?

The weather here is getting cold. A week ago frost ended any garden growth. We have dug our potatoes and find the average size better than last year's.

But again we can ask, Have we grown? Has a little frost killed our aims and desires as Christians? I certainly hope not. We should be made of the sturdy material (for we have had the full summer to grow to that stature) and winter is soon approaching.

The first frost completely destroyed some marigolds in front of our house, but the sweet peas are still there, blooming and growing persistently. What a good example! We should not let the first little temptation or trouble destroy us. But we should overcome and become more happy than we were.

Life is not made up of all things beautiful and good, so we should learn to destroy the bad in ourselves in order to see the good things, and do them.

Moyie, British Columbia, Canada

R. F.

Unmoveable

It's difficult to relate to you what the *Megiddo Message* has meant to me! Just how long I've searched for truths I do not know, but I have found much help in studying these truths made plain by the Megiddo publications.

I have always tried to be honest with everyone and to speak the truth as I see it, but I came to understand that sometimes it's better to remain silent, even when one knows something is wrong. So many folks have a sore thumb, and we have to be careful how we bump it.

I particularly enjoyed the September issue of the *Megiddo Message*, page 19, "Learning to Keep Silence." A judicious reticence is hard to learn, but it is one of the great lessons of life. Sometimes it is anger or malice or deliberate guile that prompts us to say what would have been better left unsaid.

I am trying to apply this to my own life and I know with each trial I grow stronger. "I have set the Lord always before me: because he is at my right hand, I shall not be moved."

Thermopolis, Wyoming

R. W. A.

UNDERSTANDING THE BIBLE

"Study to shew thyself approved unto God."

The Devil of the Bible

IN THE first three parts of this study on the devil of the Bible, we have covered many aspects of this subtle tempter of men. We have learned that his habitation is the human heart, the only devil being the evil that lurks there.

We have shown from the Bible that there is positively no evidence of a spirit being that tempts any man to do evil. It is man's own lusts, his own evil desires that lead him to sin. Man has no one to blame but himself when he sins. God tempts no one and the devil tempts no one, "but every man is tempted, when he is drawn away of his own lust, and enticed. Then when lust hath conceived, it bringeth forth sin: and sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth death" (Jas. 1:14, 15). This is the process of sin according to the Scriptures, and our own observation proves it. Human nature has not changed.

We will continue our study of the devil, following our outline:

- IV. Why Is the Devil So Prevalent?
 - B. Because Man Desires and Chooses the Evil
 - C. Because Man is Stubborn
 - D. Because Justice is Bound
- V. Why Does God Allow Evil to Exist?
 - A. It Was Prophesied
 - B. It Was According to His Plan
 - C. Men Will Not Hearken to God
 - D. Evil Chastens the Good
- VI. Resisting the Devil

Sin was the devil that was active in olden times, and sin is the only devil that is active in the world today. We find that his works are varied: He is a man who quotes Scripture; he is one who hinders the gospel; he poses as an "angel of light"; he is the enemy who sows the tares among the wheat; he appears as a false prophet or false teacher; he falsely accuses the Christians; he seeks to take advantage of the believers. But we repeat again, that in every instance the only devil is sin or the sinner.

IV. WHY IS THE DEVIL SO PREVALENT?

B. Because Man Desires and Chooses the Evil

2. **Joshua gave the people a choice.** After the children of Israel had reached the Promised Land, Joshua encouraged them to choose to serve God: "Choose you this day whom ye will serve; . . . but as for me and my house, we will serve the Lord" (Josh. 24:15). In spite of Joshua's warning, the record is clear that many times they did not choose the right, for it is recorded often that "the children of Israel did evil in the sight of the Lord." It was of their own choosing.

3. **Job showed man's choice.** Job clearly indicated the natural choice of men. "Therefore they say unto God, Depart from us; for we desire not the knowledge of thy ways. What is the Almighty, that we should serve him? and what profit should we have, if we pray unto him?" (Job 21:14, 15). Again, **it is man's choice not to serve God; the devil has no part in it.**

4. **Jesus showed that it was man's choice.** Jesus taught that He was the way to God, that He was the Light, and that only through Him could men be saved. But He also knew human nature, for He said, "Ye will not come to me, that ye might have life. Here lies the test: the light has come into the world, but men preferred darkness to light because their deeds were evil" (John 5:40; 3:19 NEB). **Men prefer darkness to light because their deeds are evil.** Jesus saw that men preferred the darkness in His day and it is the same today.

C. Because Man Is Stubborn

Man's natural stubbornness is also a cause of the evil in the world. The men of Sodom could have escaped destruction by fleeing, but they would not. Noah's generation was given the chance to enter the ark, but they would not. Cain was given an opportunity to do good, but he refused.

1. **God calls, but man refuses.** Man makes it his deliberate choice to do evil. God says, "I have called, and ye refused; I have stretched out my hand, and no man regarded: But ye have set at naught all my counsel, and would none of my reproof: . . . they hated knowledge, and did not choose the fear of the

Lord" (Prov. 1:24, 25, 29). **It is man's choosing, not the devil's doing.**

2. Man will not learn righteousness now. God calls on man to "Cease to do evil, learn to do well," but he will not. "Let favour be shewed to the wicked, yet will he not learn righteousness: in the land of uprightness will he deal unjustly, . . . when thy judgments are in the earth, the inhabitants of the world will learn righteousness" (Isa. 26:10, 9). God shows His favor by allowing the sun to shine on the wicked as much as the righteous, but they will not change. **Again, it is their own doing; no devil is involved.**

3. God called through the prophets, but man refused. Through the prophet Jeremiah, God called on His people that they might be spared the captivity. "Thus saith the Lord, Stand ye in the ways, and see, and ask for the old paths, where is the good way, and walk therein, and ye shall find rest for your souls. But they said, We will not walk therein. Also I set watchmen over you, saying, Harken to the sound of the trumpet. But they said, We will not hearken" (Jer. 7:16, 17).

The prophet Zechariah tells why they would not listen: "But they refused to hearken, and pulled away the shoulder, and stopped their ears, that they should not hear. Yea, they made their hearts as an adamant stone, lest they should hear the law, and the words which the Lord of hosts hath sent in his spirit by the former prophets" (Zech. 7:11, 12). **It was entirely their own doing. There is no indication of a devil.**

D. Because Justice Is Bound

Evil flourishes in our land today because men are not quickly brought to justice, but that is as it was prophesied and not because of any influence of the devil. "Because sentence against an evil work is not executed speedily, therefore the heart of the sons of men is fully set in them to do evil" (Eccl. 8:11). The New English renders it, "It is because sentence upon a wicked act is not promptly carried out that men do evil so boldly."

Isaiah also prophesied that it would be so: "Justice is rebuffed and flouted while righteousness stands aloof; truth stumbles in the market-place and honesty is kept out of court, so truth is lost to sight, and whoever shuns evil is thought a madman" (Isa. 59:14, 15 NEB).

V. WHY DOES GOD ALLOW EVIL TO EXIST?

When you read of soaring crime rates, embezzlements, protest marches and violence, have you ever said "Why doesn't God do something to stop all this wickedness?" No doubt you have, as have many

others. God **could**, and one day He **will** use His power and might to stop all evil. Because He has not yet done so is no proof that He will not, for the promise is that He "shall roar out of Zion, and utter his voice from Jerusalem; and the heavens and the earth shall shake" (Joel 3:16).

God chooses to keep silent at this time because this is part of His plan for the salvation of man (see Part 3 of this series). We will review some of the reasons why God allows the evil in the world.

A. It Was Prophesied

Because God foresaw what would be in the last days, He caused it to be written that "in the last days perilous times shall come," or as rendered by the New English, "The final age of this world is to be a time of troubles" (II Tim. 3:1). Verse 13 accurately describes the last days: "But evil men and seducers shall wax worse and worse, deceiving and being deceived." **Note Paul did not say the devil would become more powerful, but "evil men and seducers shall wax worse and worse." The evil men are the only devils.**

Paul made a further prediction in the next chapter: "For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears," or as rendered by the New English, they will "gather a crowd of teachers to tickle their ears" (v. 3). It is "their own lusts" that lead them to evil. This agrees with other Scripture: "Temptation arises when a man is enticed and lured away by his own lust" (Jas. 1:14, NEB). **Neither God nor a devil is involved; man's own lust leads him to the false teachers and into evil.**

The fulfillment of these prophecies and others convinces us that we are living in the "last days," that is, the last days of man's rule on the earth. God does not count time as man counts time, hence the "last days" does not mean a period of "days," but used figuratively it could represent a period of years.

B. It Was According to His Plan

A careful study of the Scriptures proves that it was God's intent that both good men and wicked men would inhabit the earth throughout the 6000 years of man's rule. There are a number of proofs for this statement.

1. Tares and wheat grow together until the harvest. Jesus spoke clearly on the subject in one of His parables. When the servant in the parable asked if he should gather out the tares the Master answered: "Let both grow together until the harvest: and in the time of harvest I will say to the reapers, Gather ye together first the tares, and bind them in bundles to burn them: but gather the wheat into

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my barn" (Matt. 13:30). Jesus explained the harvest as "the end of the world" (margin: consummation of the age), or the end of man's rule at His coming. Both tares (wicked) and wheat (righteous) were to be allowed to coexist until He comes.

2. The wicked are to be cut off at His coming. The very fact that a Judgment is to be held to separate the righteous from the wicked presupposes that both will be there at that time. Zechariah informs us that "two parts therein shall be cut off and die" during the Battle of Armageddon, showing that evil men outnumber the good two to one.

As long as wicked men live there will be wickedness. Jesus said that God sends the rain on the just and the unjust; Job saw that wicked men prosper as much as the righteous; the Psalmist perceived the prosperity of the wicked. And it is so in our day, the wicked prosper and God is silent; He allows it to be so. We can rejoice that it will not always be so.

C. Men Will Not Hearken to God

God desires that all Israel might be saved, but they will not. He gives all the chance, but the majority ignore His call. He admonishes man to "seek good, and not evil, that ye may live," and to "hate the evil, and love the good" (Amos 5:14, 15). Again He pleads, "Obey my voice, and I will be your God, and ye shall be my people" (Jer. 7:23). The following verse gives the answer: "But they hearkened not, nor inclined their ear, but walked in the counsels and in the imagination of their evil heart, and went backward, and not forward" (v. 24).

Note in verse 24: they go their own way, they walk according to the counsel of their own evil hearts. They do as they please; it is not the devil's doing. No outside influence is suggested. God simply allows it.

D. Evil Chastens the Good

God allows conditions to be as they are in the world for the benefit of those who will work out their salvation. The world is a proving ground for the Christian today just as the wilderness was a proving ground for the children of Israel. The trials and temptations that buffet the Christian daily are the making or breaking of a stone for God's temple.

1. God proved Israel in the wilderness. The forty years the children of Israel spent in the wilderness were for a purpose. It was part of the discipline necessary to teach them to obey. Speaking through Moses, God said, "And thou shalt remember all the way which the Lord thy God led thee these forty years in the wilderness, to humble thee, and to prove thee, to know what was in thine heart, whether thou wouldest keep his commandments, or no" (Deut. 8:2). **The wilderness was the proving ground**

God provided. He did not provide a devil to tempt them.

God continued to prove His people in later years after they had reached the Promised Land. He had promised to drive out the nations before them, but because of Israel's disobedience He allowed some to stay, saying, "I also will not henceforth drive out any from before them of the nations which Joshua left when he died: That through them I may prove Israel, whether they will keep the way of the Lord to walk therein" (Judges 2:21, 22). Again, God was testing, trying, proving His people through trials. He allowed the foreign nations to overrun Israel again and again because of their disobedience. **A devil had no part in it.**

2. God is proving and choosing His own today.

In our day, living in the world is the Christian's wilderness experience. In John 17, Jesus prayed that His disciples should be in the world but not of the world. Barclay makes an interesting analysis of this prayer. He writes, in part, "Jesus did not pray that His disciples should be taken out of this world, . . . nor that they might find escape, . . . but that they might find victory." He reasons that Christianity buried in a monastery is not the Christianity Jesus taught, that it "was never meant to withdraw a man from life, but to better equip him for life, . . . that it does not offer us a release from problems, but a way to solve those problems." It is not a life "in which troubles are escaped and evaded," but it offers a "life in which troubles are faced and conquered." The Christian is not of the world, but he must live out his Christianity in the world. He must learn "to discern both good and evil" (Heb. 5:14).

The world is our proving ground. We are to be in the world, but not of it, thus proving that we can overcome the world. **God allows the temptations and trials to prove men, but He does not provide a devil or an evil spirit to tempt anyone.**

VI. RESISTING THE DEVIL

We now come to the most important aspect of our study. We as Christians, surrounded by the wickedness of the world—the devil of today—need to make our defenses sure against this enemy, sin and all sinners.

From the earlier parts of our study of this subject, we should be able to recognize the devil most important for us to conquer—the sin in our own hearts. The next most important step to recognizing him is to be able to resist him effectively.

A. Recognizing the Devil

To be able to fight our enemy, we must first be able to recognize him. We will admit there are many

devils (evil men) at large in the world, but the one most important for us to conquer is much closer home. Someone has said, "To see the devil, look in the mirror." This trite saying speaks the truth: Our own personal devil, the evil in our own heart, is the one we need to conquer.

Jesus said, "By their fruits ye shall know them" (Matt. 7:20). We can judge by our own fruits whether or not we have a devil to conquer. We cannot compare ourselves with one another, for we read that they that compare themselves among themselves are not wise (II Cor. 10:12). Our measure of comparison must be God's rule, the Bible. Any of the many evils mentioned in the Scriptures that might be in our hearts are devils that must be banished.

B. Resisting the Devil

Once we recognize our enemy and admit that he exists we can, with the proper weapons and the necessary will, conquer him. God provides us with both; we have only to use them. "Resist the devil, and he will flee from you," is the command of the apostle James. Peter also calls on Christians to resist this adversary, the devil. We will review some of the ways of resisting him.

1. **We need the God-given armor.** Paul describes the armor for us and commands that we "Put on the whole armour of God." The various parts of this armor are further described as truth, righteousness, the gospel of peace, the shield of faith, the helmet of salvation and the sword of the Spirit (Eph. 6:11—17). With this armor it is possible to fight and win over any evil. **The weapons are spiritual and the warfare is spiritual, hence the devil could not be literal. The war is against the power of evil, the devil to be resisted.**

2. **We need to be armed with the mind of Christ.** The apostle Peter commands us to arm ourselves with the same mind as that of Christ. If we are thus armed, we will surely be able to resist the devil, for Christ did **always the things that pleased His Father (John 8:29)**. A mind like that of Christ will be so filled with God's thoughts there will be no room for evil thoughts.

3. **We are to "put on" Christ.** Paul commands in Romans 13:14, "Put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make not provision for the flesh to fulfill the lusts thereof." Moffatt renders it "the character of the Lord Jesus Christ," and the New English reads, "Let Christ Jesus himself be the armour that you wear." **If we put on the character of Jesus we will be without sin, without a devil to conquer.**

4. **We resist the devil by putting away anger, wrath and malice.** Every sin overcome is the devil resisted. "Cease from anger, and forsake wrath,";

"Let all bitterness, and wrath, and anger, and clamour, and evil speaking, be put away from you, with all malice"; "Put off all these; anger, wrath, malice, blasphemy, filthy communication out of your mouth"; "for the wrath of man worketh not the righteousness of God" (Ps. 37:8; Eph. 4:31; Col. 3:8; Jas. 1:20). "He that is slow to anger is better than the mighty; and he that ruleth his spirit than he that taketh a city" (Prov. 16:32).

5. **We resist the devil by putting off the old man.** The "Old man," or the "flesh," is our enemy, the devil, and wars against our higher nature. **When we resist the temptations of the lower nature we resist the devil.** The apostle Paul revealed the struggle within himself between the two natures (Rom. 7:15—23), and in another letter he showed how he mastered himself: "I keep under my body, and bring it into subjection: lest that by any means, when I have preached to others, I myself should be a castaway" (I Cor. 9:27). **In so doing he was keeping his own command of putting off the old man and putting on the new (Eph. 4:22—24; Col. 3:9, 10). He was resisting the devil, the old man.**

To be a messenger you must know the message.

TEST YOURSELF

1. Why do we naturally prefer the darkness of unenlightenment rather than the revealing light of God's Word?

2. List three verses of Scripture that show God's persistence in pleading with men, and man's refusal to listen.

3. Give three reasons why evil abounds in our world today.

4. How will God break His long silence on earth?

5. Show from the Bible that it was God's purpose to let both evil and good exist for a long period of time.

MEMORIZE

To aid you in your understanding of this Bible subject, why not try memorizing one of the following verse each week of this coming month?

1. James 1:13, 14

2. Mark 7:20—23

3. John 6:70

4. Matthew 16:23

<i>Reprints of these studies are available upon request.</i>
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THE SABBATH

WHEN WAS IT GIVEN?
TO WHOM WAS IT GIVEN?
WHY WAS IT GIVEN?
WAS IT TO LAST FOREVER?
IF NOT, WHEN WAS IT TO CEASE?
WHAT LAW ARE WE NOW UNDER?

Jesus and the Law

JESUS' attitude toward the law of Moses is evident in His Sermon on the Mount. "Ye have heard that it was said by them of old time, Thou shalt not kill; and whosoever shall kill shall be in danger of the judgment: But I say unto you, That whosoever is angry with his brother . . . shall be in danger of the judgment. . . .

"Ye have heard that it was said by them of old time, Thou shalt not commit adultery: But I say unto you, That whosoever looketh on a woman to lust after her hath committed adultery with her already in his heart" (Matt. 5:21, 22, 27, 28). And following this pattern Jesus shows how His own teaching, the law of faith, is superior to that of the law of Moses. He traces the individual prescriptions of the law right back to the intention which lay behind them. He condemned evil at its source: the thought (Mark 7:21—23).

Jesus was continually stressing the importance of religion that is not of form but of the heart. He opposed any merely external observance of the law. His attitude toward the Sabbath is one example. But there are others: He denounced the Pharisees for their meticulous outward cleanliness, while a multitude of evils proceeded from within their uncleansed hearts (Mark 7:18—23). He criticized their hypocritical attention to paying "tithe of mint and anise and cummin" while they omitted "the weightier matters of the law, judgment, mercy, and faith." He condemned their love of human praise, their "love [of] the uppermost rooms at feasts, and the chief seats in the synagogues, and greetings in the markets, and to be called of men, Rabbi, Rabbi," while they refused to recognize Christ as their Master (Matt. 23:7—10, 23—26). The outward cleanliness and faithful tithing required by the law

of Moses were but void and empty forms if their deeper significance was overlooked.

Jesus' manner of fulfilling the commandments of the old law by means of intensifying them (as in the Sermon on the Mount) naturally had the effect of abolishing the literal sense of the Ten Commandment law and of replacing it by new commandments of deeper meaning. If we phrase the Sabbath commandment in a manner parallel to Jesus' wording and amplifying of the other commandments mentioned in Matthew 5, its sense would run something like this: "You have heard that it was said by them of old time, 'Keep holy the sabbath day'; but I say unto you: only he keeps the sabbath who in the sight of God keeps holy all the days of his life." Thus the Sabbath commandment, as Jesus lived it, does not say that we should formally abstain from work on the seventh day, but that we should abstain at all times from any sinful act. The Christian should, therefore, observe a perpetual sabbath and consecrate every day to God.† The old law distinguished particular days and seasons by pious practices; the Christian should mark every day in this way.

Jesus Fulfilled the Law

If Jesus annulled the command to "Remember the sabbath day, to keep it holy," how can we understand His words in Matthew 5:17, that the law and prophets were fulfilled in Christ? If the Sabbath commandment is void and no longer enforceable on Christians, how can Jesus say that neither "one jot nor one tittle" shall pass from the law until all be fulfilled?

Sabbatarians invariably quote this text to support their claim that the Sabbath commandment, as

† Willy Rordorf, *Sunday*, pp. 100ff.

well as the whole of the Decalog, is still binding on Christians today. Surface reading of the text could easily deduce this thought, but as we have seen, this was not Jesus' teaching. Had Jesus been referring here to the perpetual nature of the law of Moses, why would He have warned His disciples in verse 20 that their righteousness must "far exceed" or be "far superior to" the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees of the day? The scribes and Pharisees kept the law of Moses—and kept it meticulously. Or had Jesus been teaching that not one of the "least" of the commandments of the Decalog could be broken, He would have contradicted His own words, as well as His life—for even the scribes and Pharisees kept that law.

When Jesus said that not one jot or tittle should pass from the law until "all be fulfilled," what could He have meant?

The word "fulfilled," as defined in James Strong's *Exhaustive Concordance of the Bible*, is *ginomai*, meaning, "to pass, to come to pass, be ended, fall, be finished, . . . pass, be performed, be published, . . . used with great latitude (lit., fig., etc.)." Greenfield's *Bible Dictionary* defines it: "To bring to a close, end, finish, complete." The law ended with Christ. "Heaven and earth shall sooner perish than one iota or one tittle of the law shall perish without attaining to its end" (Luke 16:17, *Macknight, Campbell, Doddridge*).

The coming of Christ was the fulfillment of much prophecy concerning Himself. Said Jesus, "These are the words which I spake unto you, while I was yet with you, that all things must be fulfilled, which were written in the law of Moses, and in the prophets, and in the psalms, concerning me" (Luke 24:44).

"Till all be fulfilled"—when the law reached its fulfillment in Christ, it was not necessary for Christ to destroy it. To illustrate the point: A man is convicted of crime and sentenced by the law to six years in prison. At the end of the six years the law that holds him in prison dies of itself, it does not need to be destroyed; it ceases because of its limitation. Its time is fulfilled, expired. The very construction and wording of the law shows that its end is come; it is fulfilled.

In the same way Christ fulfilled the law of Moses; the time had come for the law to die, and He merely marked its termination. The purpose of the law was complete, and the law ceased to exist. ●●

(Continued Next Issue)

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

The Leprosy of Sin

THE INSTRUCTIVE story of Naaman (II Kings 6) is familiar to all. His courage in battle, his greatness with his master, and the high esteem in which he was held among his own people; but overshadowing all, his incurable leprosy. With all his valiancy and honors, Naaman was little better than a dead man. For Naaman was a leper.

Notwithstanding his leprosy, Naaman was still a very proud man. And when told by the Prophet what he must do to be made clean, he started away "in a rage." Only after listening to the good advice of his servants did he relent and go down and dip himself seven times in Jordan, according to the message from the man of God. And only then was he made clean.

What a fool that man Naaman must have been! people have exclaimed ever since his day. He did not deserve to be healed! Either he was not very concerned about his leprosy, or he was a madman to do as he did. Madman he was, but with pride, and self-importance, and self-will. And what of us, who have his history before us? Are we not so beset with self-will and pride and self-reliance that we forget the deadliness of our sin and refuse to obey the Word of the Lord?

The greatest difference between Naaman's leprosy and ours is that he was acutely aware of his dreadful disease. Leprosy was visible. Naaman needed no divine grace to teach him that he was a leper. Day and night, in the council chamber and in the battlefield, eating and drinking, waking and sleeping he was constantly haunted by the sickening thought: He was a leper.

Our leprosy is more subtle. We may be sick from head to foot with leprous sores, so that there is no soundness in our flesh (Ps. 38), and yet be so self-deceived that we think we are clean and sound. Beware! This self-deception is very dangerous, because it lulls us into complacency. A wise man once said, "The deadliest sin of all is to be conscious of no sin."

When our sin is naked and obvious to all, our condition is comparatively safe. But if we have allowed our consciences to be seared over by self-justification so that we have become insensitive to the touch of sin and no longer feel it as we should, our condition is worse than was Naaman's. We can often to our peril, make ourselves believe almost anything, even to the point where we call evil good and good evil.

The first essential in moral reformation is to call sin by its right name, and then to cease tampering with it. Partaking of our own ways, small and trivial though they may seem to us, will prove just as fatal to us in the end as leprosy ever was to mortal man. The majority of religious teachers in the world today would soften words such as these. They would offer terms which appear to lessen the sinfulness of our actions; they would give our sins an aspect of innocence. But sin is sin, give it whatever name we will. It is the transgression of God's law, and "the wages of sin is death."

Let us tolerate no more moral compromising with ourselves, but rather let us in the light of God's Word see our leprous condition. Only when we have identified our sins will we be able to do anything about them. This brave facing of ourselves we will never regret, for the recognition of sin is the first step toward salvation.

The difference between confessing and forsaking, between covering our sins and exposing them, is the difference between life and death. However painful the process, we should go to work with a will, heed the Lord's counsel, and like Naaman, humble ourselves, and wash and be clean. • •

Jesus and Paul Mistaken? | NO!

(Continued from page 6)

to appear during that age. Listen to his words:

"Knowing this first, that there shall come in the last days scoffers, walking after their own lusts, and saying, Where is the promise of his coming?" When would these scoffers arise and say, "Where is the promise of his coming?" "In the last days." What last days? The last days of Gentile times. Over nineteen hundred years ago Peter, divinely inspired, could foretell that in these last days scoffers would arise, crying, "Where is the promise of his coming?" If Peter believed Christ was to come in that age, would the Apostle have forecast events associated with it as occurring in the last days?

Then, in order to enlighten us as to the time Christ *would* come, Peter says in II Peter 3:8, "But beloved, be not ignorant of this one thing, that one day is with the Lord as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day."

What is the significance of this saying? In Hebrews 10:1, we read that the law was "a shadow of good things to come." From Exodus 20 we learn that under the law of Moses, in the type, were six days of toil and labor, followed by a seventh day of rest. A day for a thousand years gives us six thousand years of labor and toil, six thousand years of

man's rule on the earth, to be followed by the blessed seventh day of rest, a thousand years of peace and happiness. This is what Peter was teaching when he entreated those to whom he ministered not to be ignorant of the fact that one day with the Lord may represent a thousand years. He was teaching that Christ would not set up His kingdom until the close of a six-thousand-year period.

In verse 9 (II Peter 3) the Apostle explains why Christ had not yet come the second time: "The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness; but is longsuffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance." There had to be a people taken out from among the Gentiles, and Jesus is waiting through the centuries for all who would become worthy of living with Him in the glorious age to come.

Was Paul Misled?

In II Timothy 4:1, 7, 8, Paul makes plain that he did not expect Jesus to return in that age. He says, "I charge thee therefore before God, and the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall judge the quick and the dead at his appearing and his kingdom. . . . I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith: henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day: and not to me only, but unto all them also that love his appearing." He did not expect to receive his reward in that age, but he knew the crown of glory was laid up for him, to be bestowed at the Judgment seat of Christ when He comes to judge the living and the dead and set up His glorious Kingdom.

The Apostasy Must Come First

The apostle Paul offers further evidence that he did not believe Christ would return during his lifetime. In II Thess. 1:7, 10, he states that the Lord is coming: "And to you who are troubled, rest with us, when the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with his mighty angels . . . when he shall come to be glorified in his saints, and to be admired of all them that believe." Then fearing that someone might pervert his words, he continues in chapter 2:

"Now we beseech you, brethren, by the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, and by our gathering together unto him, that ye be not soon shaken in mind, or be troubled, neither by spirit, nor by word, nor by letter as from us, as that the day of Christ is at hand. Let no man deceive you by any means: for that day shall not come, except there come a falling away first, and that man of sin be revealed, the son of perdition."

How plain and emphatic he is: "Let no man deceive you"! He warned them not to be deceived by any false teachers who might claim that he (Paul) was teaching that Christ would come in their day. No, Christ would not come until after the falling away from the truth, which would be caused by the man of sin, that evil power which should arise and wear out the saints of the Most High and cast the truth to the ground. What our King James Version terms a "falling away first" is rendered by Weymouth's translation and by Wilson's *Emphatic Diaglott* as "the Apostasy comes first." In verse 5 we find the Apostle not only wrote this to the Thessalonian brethren, but he told them personally, for he says, "Remember ye not, that, when I was yet with you, I told you these things?" He had made it plain to them that Christ would not come until after the falling away from the true religion, the Apostasy, and he did not want them to forget it.

Jesus' Own Prophecy

In Matthew 25, by way of parable, Jesus enlightened His listeners as to the course of events that would culminate in His second coming, picturing it as an event yet in the far future. Verse 19 reads: "After a long time the lord of those servants cometh, and reckoneth with them." After a long time. His second coming was not then imminent; it was not an event to take place in the near future. In this way Jesus revealed to them that His kingdom would not be set up soon. Hence, they *were* enlightened, and if they failed to grasp the truth of Jesus' words, they themselves and not Jesus were to blame for their misconception.

An analysis of the first part of Matthew 25 reveals other evidences that Jesus did not at that time expect His second coming to be in the near future—and notice the similarity of His evidences to those given by the apostle Paul years later.

The kingdom of heaven could be likened to "ten virgins, which took their lamps, and went forth to meet the bridegroom." Five were wise and took oil in their vessels, and five were foolish, and took no extra oil with them. A long night—the darkness of the apostasy from the true religion (Dan. 7:25; 8:11, 12; II Tim. 4:1—4), must intervene before His second coming could be a reality.

The term "ten" is a sacred or round number, representing all who enter into covenant and agree to serve God, both faithful and unfaithful, wise and foolish. The wise and the foolish both equipped themselves with lamps (the Word of God, Ps. 119:105), and the wise kept their light burning brightly; they were not simply hearers of the Word—they were doers. The foolish let their faith-lamps

burn low, they lost their first love for God and His truth, and soon their lamps went out.

The fifth verse records a significant event: "While the bridegroom tarried, they all slumbered and slept." Christ, the Bridegroom, went to heaven, the Most Holy Place, as our great High Priest; and all in His absence went to sleep. The fact is plainly taught in the Scriptures and verified on the pages of history. All apostatized; all forsook the religion of Jesus. And this was foretold to happen before Christ's second advent.

In Daniel 7:25 and 8:12, as mentioned above, we read of the great power that was to wear out the saints of the Most High, change God's times and laws, and "cast down the truth to the ground." This terrible event was foretold by the apostle Paul in II Tim. 4:3, 4: "For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine, . . . and they shall turn away their ears from the truth, and shall be turned unto fables." Were they not spiritually asleep when turned from the truth unto fables? Jesus had revealed this truth in Matt. 25:5, but He was so anxious to have it deeply impressed upon the minds of His people that after He had ascended to the Father He sent an angel back to earth with another message, as we find recorded in Rev. 1:1; and in chapter 13, He pictures the Apostasy. History, both secular and ecclesiastical, is one continuous recital of evidence that the true teachings of Jesus were totally obscured during the Dark Ages; the veil of darkness was over all nations. As the ecclesiastical historian Mosheim states, "True religion lay buried under a senseless mass of superstitions, and was unable to raise her head."

From Matt. 25:6 we learn that truth was not always to be cast to the earth, but that some would awake from the slumber which had benumbed all nations: "At midnight there was a cry made, Behold, the bridegroom cometh; go ye out to meet him." This is the same cry proclaimed by the prophet Joel (2:1, 16): "Blow ye the trumpet in Zion, and sound an alarm in my holy mountain: let all the inhabitants of the land tremble: for the day of the Lord cometh, for it is nigh at hand. . . . Gather the people, sanctify the congregation, assemble the elders, gather the children. . . . Let the bridegroom go forth of his chamber, and the bride out of her closet." The prophet is speaking of the long night of darkness when all would slumber and sleep: The time had not been in their days, nor in the days of their fathers (Joel 1:2), the time when no trees of righteousness were bearing the lovely fruits of the spirit, but all mankind had been turned away from truth to fables.

Jesus had said in Matt. 24:45 that there would arise a "faithful and wise servant" who would give

MEGIDDO MESSAGE.

the household meat in due season. The faithful and wise servant is the one to sound the midnight cry. Christ, the Bridegroom, would not come as soon as the midnight cry began to sound, however, for there has to be a time of preparation for those taken out in this eleventh hour of the day of salvation (Matt. 20:9).

"Be Not Deceived"

Jesus gave us clear warning: "And he said, Take heed that ye be not deceived: for many shall come in my name, saying, I am Christ; and the time draweth near: go ye not therefore after them" (Luke 21:8). These words are plain. Jesus warns that impostors will arise, saying that the time draws near.

In the following verses He tells them that nation shall rise against nation, kingdom against kingdom; and in verses 20—32 He foretells many events which must precede His second coming. He said, "And when ye shall see Jerusalem compassed with armies, then know that the desolation thereof is nigh." He was here foretelling the destruction of Jerusalem and the dispersion of the Jewish people under Titus and Vespasian at the head of the Roman army, A. D. 70, when more than a million Jews perished in the siege and thousands were taken captive according to His prediction: "They shall fall by the edge of the sword, and shall be led away captive into all nations: and Jerusalem shall be trodden down of the Gentiles until the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled." Jesus stretched His grand prophetic chain from the destruction of Jerusalem, when the Jewish age ended, over the centuries of Gentile times to the glorious Day when Jerusalem shall rise from the dust of ages to become "the city of the great King" (Matt. 5:35). In this way He pictures a long period of time before His return to earth.

Signs of the End

What shall occur as the Gentile times are closing?

"And there shall be signs in the sun, and in the moon, and in the stars; and upon the earth distress of nations, with perplexity; the sea and the waves roaring; men's hearts failing them for fear, and for looking after those things which are coming on the earth: for the powers of heaven shall be shaken. And then shall they see the Son of man coming in a cloud with power and great glory" (Luke 21:25—27). Jesus made no reference to the physical sky, but to the national sky, the political heavens, where many suns have set and many more suns are waning. He looked down through the ages, beyond the dark Medieval Age to the close of Gentile times, and scanning the political heavens He saw dark clouds

rising here and there. He said, "I have told you before it come to pass, that, when it is come to pass, ye might believe" (John 14:29). He told us all nations would be preparing for war, and yet in great fear would endeavor to come to terms so they could cry "Peace, peace; when there is no peace" (Jer. 6:14), but with suspicion and distrust on every hand. Worse than all, He foresaw the wave of moral desolation that would sweep over the land; a condition of which a noted speaker, after enumerating a number of the degrading tendencies and gross evils of the age, says, "... when those things and worse represent the chief trend in human thought and life, then the human race is trembling on the edge of an abyss deeper and fouler than any reached by the civilizations of the past."

Can we not realize the true picture of our present age and realize that Jesus did not expect to return during the first century? It is when the dark clouds of crime and immorality and lawlessness and youthful disobedience hang heavy over the world that Jesus tells us to look up—"And then shall they see the Son of man coming in a cloud with power and great glory." Yes, *then*, and only then. ●●



Which Are You?

"Though the fig-tree may not blossom, though no fruit is on the vine, though the olive crop has failed, though the fields give us no food, though the folds have lost their flocks, and in the stalls no cattle lie, yet in the Eternal we will find our joy, we will rejoice in the God who saves us. The Lord, the Eternal, is our strength, he... helps us to keep our footing on the heights."

—Habakkuk 3:17—19

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

"I have been following your installment, 'Understanding the Bible,' currently subtitled, 'The Devil of the Bible,' if not with enlightenment, with interest.

"In it you state, 'The source of sin and evil is stated unequivocally by Jesus, the apostles and prophets: It is the heart or mind of man. Sin results from the fleshly lusts and evil desires of man and these are conceived in the heart or mind of man, then transmitted into an act of sin. A man may be influenced to sin by another man, but there is absolutely no evidence that anyone was ever influenced by a superhuman being or immortal spirit, such as the devil is supposed to be.'

"I beg to differ. Since God, who is a superhuman being, is the sole Creator of the universe and all things in it, as described in Genesis, it logically follows that God Himself must be the source of evil (as well as good), as the prophet Amos states, 'Shall there be evil in a city, and the Lord hath not done it?' (Amos 3:6)."

You have quoted the text you question from the King James Version. The New Catholic Bible is similar: "Shall there be evil in a city, which the Lord hath not done?" And in a footnote this thought is given, "he speaks of the evil of the punishments of war, famine, pestilence, destruction, desolation, etc., but not of the evil of sin, of which God is not the author."

Apparently the wording in the original Hebrew of this text is obscure, as the newer translations differ in their treatment of the text. The marginal reference in the KJV gives the alternate wording, "and shall not the Lord do somewhat?" which removes all possibility of God being the author of evil from the reading of Amos 3:6.

"Doesn't Isaiah 45:7 also prove that God is the creator of evil as well as of good? Also consider Ecclesiasticus 11:14."

Isaiah 45:7 reads: "I form the light, and create darkness: I make peace, and create evil: I the Lord do all these things." Surely these words are not to be taken literally. How could a God of infinite goodness and mercy be the creator of darkness and evil? "God is light, and in him is no darkness at all" (1 John 1:5).

One approach to the meaning of the above text is to determine the use of the word "create." In the process of the creation of any valuable commodity,

raw material is taken and processed into a finished product. Let us see if the word for "create" has any such definitions.

Young's *Analytical Concordance* gives the Hebrew word *bara*, translated "create" in Isaiah 45:7, and suggests for its definitions: "to prepare, form, fashion, create." Strong's *Exhaustive Concordance* gives the following definitions of the Hebrew word *bara*: "to cut down (as wood), select, feed (as formative processes):—choose, create (creator), cut down, dispatch, do make (fat)." God in His formative processes cuts down evil and darkness, forming from them righteousness and light.

The text you suggest from Ecclesiasticus 11:14 does not actually say that God creates "good things and bad, life and death, poverty and wealth." It merely states that these things come from the Lord, that is, He permits them. Many times God is said to do the things which He permits to be done. However, we do not accept the Apocryphal books as Scripture.

"You state in regard to David's numbering of Israel that according to 1 Chron. 21:1, 'Satan stood up against Israel, and provoked David to number Israel'; but that according to 1 Chron. 21:17 and 2 Sam. 24:10, David himself was the 'satan.' You seem to have overlooked 2 Sam. 24:1, which states, 'And again the anger of the Lord was kindled against Israel, and he moved David to say, Go, number Israel and Judah.' This sounds as though God was leading David to do wrong. Please clarify the seeming non-agreement."

This may be another instance where God is said to do what He permits to be done.

It has been pointed out that the Hebrew mind showed little interest in secondary causes. Every event was traced directly to the final and first cause, God. If something happened, God was responsible. This took place, and God did this, were alternate ways of saying the same thing.

On this point of human responsibility the views of the Pharisees were clearly defined. The classic expression of their attitude comes to us through Josephus: "All things are governed by Fate, yet they (the Pharisees) do not take away from men the freedom of acting as they see fit. For they think that it has pleased God to mix up the decrees of Fate and man's will so man can act virtuously or viciously." This approach, if applied to 2 Sam. 24:1, could remove the seeming non-agreement between 2 Sam. 24:10 and the first verse of the same chapter. We firmly believe the Bible to be in harmony with itself, and that it is indeed the Word of God.

Another factor to be considered is the possibility of error on the part of the translators. The Hebrew

language is so difficult to decipher that it is next to impossible to know just what the original writers were saying in some cases.

A statement by so eminent a scholar as J. B. Phillips in his preface to his *Four Prophets, Amos, Hosea, Micah, Isaiah*, points up the difficulty in translating Old Testament Hebrew: "But who could feel at home in the presence of the monolithic grandeur of Old Testament Hebrew? Only, it appeared to me, a chosen few. There seemed to be no concessions to human frailty of understanding in these terse craggy characters. Message after message is packed full of power, and expressed with a terrifying economy of words. I found myself in full agreement with Martin Luther, who once wrote, 'The words of the Hebrew tongue have a peculiar energy. It is impossible to convey so much so briefly in any other language. To render them intelligently we must not attempt to give word for word, but only aim at the sense and the idea.'"

"How is Christ made for us 'wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption' (I Cor. 1:30) that we may glory in the Lord and not in ourselves, if we are responsible for our own good works?"

Before we can draw any valid conclusions, we need to examine the context of these verses to see what Paul is saying to his Corinthian brethren.

Verse 26 reads, "For ye see your calling, brethren, how that not many wise men after the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble, are called." Paul is contrasting the wisdom of the world with that of God. To reinforce his position that the wisdom of God is immeasurably more valuable, he draws an example from the Corinthian brethren themselves. Though they represent the humbler segment of society and are "nobodies" in the eyes of men, theirs is a calling and a privilege which the wise and noble of earth do not enjoy. For, "the wisdom of this world is foolishness with God" (I Cor. 3:19). In the Christian faith, nothing depends on worldly success. Salvation does not come through what the world calls mighty and noble and wise, but only through what God calls wisdom.

Neither pride of intellect nor civic position and prestige counts in the eyes of God. It is to the humble-minded and the unsophisticated that God directs His call, just as the Master Himself directed it to the fishermen who were pulling in their nets by the sea. The mighty and noble of earth are self-sufficient—they have no need and no place for God.

Paul's message here is that of the Sermon on the Mount: "Blessed are the poor in spirit" (Matt. 5:3), i. e., blessed are the humble-minded, the teachable ones. Christ becomes for all such the wisdom of

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God (v. 30) and righteousness because He lived it so completely. He was the Word of God translated into human flesh and blood; He was sent to live among men and to leave them a perfect example to follow. The *New Catholic Edition* of the Bible words verse 30: "From him you are in Christ Jesus, who has become for us God-given wisdom, and justice, and sanctification, and redemption."

The *New English Bible* projects the same thought: "And so there is no place for human pride in the presence of God. You are in Christ Jesus by God's act, for God has made him our wisdom; he is our righteousness; in him we are consecrated and set free. And so (in the words of Scripture), 'If a man is proud, let him be proud of the Lord.'"

Christ is our "sanctification"; or, "in him we are consecrated." To sanctify is to set apart for a special purpose, to consecrate. We are in Christ Jesus, set apart for a special purpose, brought within the sphere of His influence, by an act of God. Therefore God is all in all; hence, if anyone should "glory" or "be proud," it must be in the Lord; self must be kept entirely out of the picture.

The term "redemption" means to be set free. This word could have a double aspect. "Ye shall know the truth," said Jesus, "and the truth shall make you free" (John 8:32); that is a step that we can and must take now; yet the greater freedom—from the bondage of mortality—must come later. Even now we are to be "redeemed from the vain conversation received by tradition from our fathers," but the redemption from the bondage of mortality is yet future.

DECEMBER 25

the Birth of Christ?

NO!

**KNOW the evidence! GIVE it
to your friends.**

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BEE REVIEW



OVER the past few months our Busy Bible Bees have been buzzing to help you boys and girls become better children. We hope that you have learned a great deal from these stories. Have you learned to be more polite, more helpful, more kind? We hope so.

This month we have a review to see how much you can remember.

True or False?

1. *Bee Polite* tells us to say "please" and "thank you."_____
2. *Bee Kind* teaches us to be kind to animals as well as people._____
3. If we grumble we are listening to the buzz of *Bee Happy*._____
4. *Bee Honest* reminds us to tell the truth._____
5. If we listen to *Bee Helpful* we will grumble when Mother or Daddy asks us to do something. _____
6. *Bee Thankful* teaches us to be thankful for what other people

do for us._____

7. If we take things that do not belong to us we are listening to *Bee Honest*._____

8. Even animals can tell when we do not listen to *Bee Kind*._____

9. Everyone likes children who listen to *Bee Polite*._____

10. If we do not listen to *Bee Helpful*, God is pleased with us._____

11. If we listen to *Bee Happy*, we'll always be glad and cheerful; we will greet other people with a smile._____

12. If we do what *Bee Thankful* tells us we will be grateful even for ordinary things._____



Look in your Bible and see which Bee is spoken of in these references.

Eph. 5:20_____

Col. 3:12_____

Eph. 4:32_____

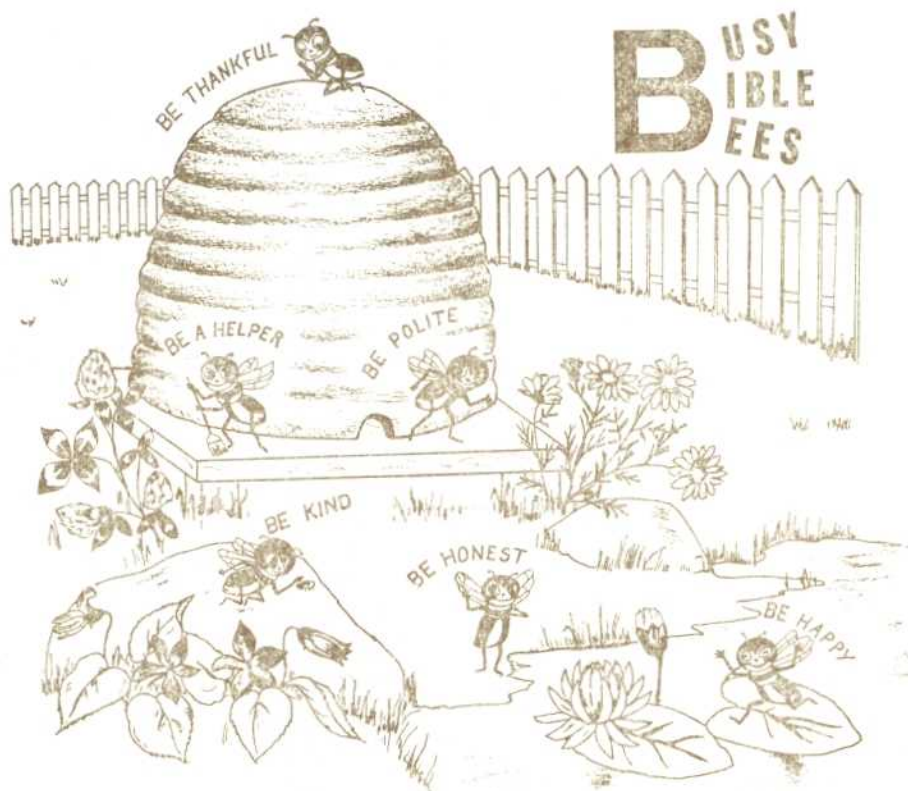
Ps. 5:11_____

Gal. 6:10_____

Rom. 12:17_____

Phil. 4:6_____

Rom. 13:13_____



Below is a whole swarm of bees. Christian bee-keeping is a full-time and profitable occupation. The honey these bees produce is very sweet indeed. We are happier ourselves and the lives of those with whom we come in contact are more bright and pleasant when the sweet honey of our bees is given to them in the form of a sunny smile, a helping hand, or a kind word or deed.

We hope you will like this "Swarm of Bees" well enough to memorize it. It can make a real difference in your life if you let it.

A Swarm of Bees

Bee happy, Bee bright,
Bee kind, Bee polite,
Bee courteous, Bee studious, Bee good,
Bee patient, Bee pure,
Bee cautious, Bee sure,
Bee temperate, Bee wise as you should.
Bee careful, Bee mild,
Bee sweet as a child,
Bee thoughtful, Bee loving, Bee true,
Bee prudent, Bee brave,
Bee sure to behave,
Bee earnest wrong thoughts to subdue.
Bee honest, Bee keen,
Bee tidy, Bee clean,
Bee reverent, Bee modest, Bee straight,
Bee faithful, Bee firm,
Bee willing to learn;
For that is the way to be great.

Happy Bee-Keeping!



Words to WALK By

The pure heart is an ever-flowing spring of goodness.

Plant patience in the garden of your soul; the roots may be bitter, but the fruits are sweet.

Heavenly power is never furnished for earthly parade.

Children have more need of models than of critics.

We may betray Christ by our silence as well as by our speech.

What can be more unkind than to communicate our low spirits to others?

The greater the difficulty, the more glory in surmounting it.

December, 1971

From A Reader—

If We Had but a Single Day

IN THIS dark world of sin and careless living, we need the help of one another to spur us on to more watchfulness lest we fall by the way.

If we had but a single day to live, I am sure we would all do our very best to use up every precious moment living in perfect obedience to God.

As practicing Christians we are charged with tasks demanding special caution, and if we fail in our obedience we may end up in failure. Being busy here and there, too preoccupied with the non-essentials of daily life, we may easily forget what we have promised we would do. In the multitude of things we can readily lose our salvation. The weightier matters of the law—judgment, mercy and faith—can be omitted, shamefully neglected or completely ignored.

No child of God should allow himself to grow careless when the Word of God enjoins us repeatedly to be watchful in all things. We must be a controlled and careful workman, God's will being our first concern. There will be temptations, of course; no life is without them. But Christian fortitude is developed under many pressures from within and from without. And if self-denial is playing a significant part in our daily walk, it will produce a victorious life.

If not weary in well-doing, patience, gentleness, goodness and meekness will rule us, not only sometimes but always. The world think it smart to vent their anger at the least provocation, but we must cease from all anger and wrath. We are duty-bound to keep the whole law in calm and in turbulent circumstances.

The world about us scoffs at purity, at holiness, at virtue. In their vain imaginations to gratify self they forget there is a God. We, on the other hand, must be a separate and peculiar people working the works of Him who has called us to glory and virtue.

What God has in store for them that love Him is beyond our comprehension. But believing His Word to be true, let us hold His promises vividly before our mental vision to give us a strong incentive to keep pushing the work and growing more spiritual each hour and day.

We may have but a single day.

Mrs. L. M. K.
South Amboy,
New Jersey

Meditations On the Word

(Continued from page 27)

thing is working for our good if we are doing our part.

We cannot expect to find a pathway strewn with roses leading to the Kingdom, or that our skies will always be sunny. God never promised us that, but He did promise to give us strength to meet every trial and resist every temptation.

Burdened with sins, worn with sorrows, encompassed with frailties though we may be, there is a hand ready to help us if we are willing to help ourselves—a guide to direct our feet when the way is steep. Hard and long though our conflict would seem to be, His divine promise insures the victory if we fight the good fight of faith.

When the disciples so readily answered the Galilean call, they may have but vaguely comprehended either the difficulties or the delights which their response entailed. Only time, temptations and trials could reveal to them the details of the following. They were to learn that treading in the footsteps of Jesus meant not only that they *forsake all* but that they *take up their cross*, a cross of self-denial, of self-renunciation, for the sake of the Gospel. Such are the difficulties, intolerable when considered independently, but nothing by comparison with the delights, the "manifold more" of joy and satisfaction which the follower of Christ reaps as he treads in his Master's footsteps (Luke 18:28—30).

We who are traveling this way of holiness, with Jesus as our Leader, should be making progress daily; if we are not, it is because we want our own way and are not willing to let God have His way.

But we can be certain that if we put ourselves under the guidance of this great Teacher of Galilee, and follow on step by step where He shows the way, we shall make rapid progress up Perfection's Hill. Every cloud will be lifted from the heights as we climb, and we shall come at last to perfect Day.

There is nothing whatever to be gained in following the world; they have nothing of life to offer. The show of things with which we are surrounded shall soon pass away, and if we are not striving to follow Jesus in all things, we shall pass away with them.

As those Galilean fishermen so willingly left their temporal duties to follow the Saviour, so we should be just as willing to leave behind our ways and our thoughts, give our all to His service, and follow Him unto the end. Let us say, "I will leave all to follow my Saviour; willing to go each step of the way."

Let us remember that the redeemed who shall stand on Mount Zion with our Lord are those who willingly followed *each* step of the way, through darkness as well as through light, through pain as well as through pleasure. "These are they which follow the Lamb whithersoever he goeth. . . . And in their mouth was found no guile: for they are without fault before the throne of God."

"Whithersoever." That word embraces the length and the breadth and the depth and the height of Christian achievement. Will you answer the Galilean call to follow the Lamb "*whithersoever* he goeth"?

"Thou dost call us! may we ever

To Thy call attentive be;

Give our hearts to Thine obedience,

Rise, leave all, and follow Thee."

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Meditations

On the Word

STRANGELY enough, these men, engaged in an occupation that was by no means most profitable or dignified, were destined to become some of Jesus' closest associates, His apostles. Although they were but humble fishermen when called by the Master, they rose to a high rank, some even becoming leaders among men. That call by Jesus was a turning point in their lives. They were not the same men from that day on. They had reached life's crossroads, so to speak, and had made a start in the way that leads to endless life and glory.

If obeying the Galilean call to "follow Me" could have such a favorable effect upon the lives of those humble fishermen, there is no reason why that same call cannot work wonders for us if we promptly obey and follow in Jesus' footsteps. Although it is not possible for us now to have personal contact with Jesus as His disciples had, yet we have the recorded account He spoke while on earth. And if we obey all His commandments, we shall then in a true sense be following Him.

There is no other message of life and hope to man to be compared for a moment with that which the divine Word brings. Though we might search through the annals of all time, the wisdom of the ages, the philosophy of all the schools, we shall find no light to scatter the gloom of the grave, no knowledge to reveal how we may perpetuate our existence, save that which comes through the recorded utterances of the Prophets, Jesus and His apostles. Jesus said, "I am the light of the world," and we can rest assured that whoever walks in that light is safe; whoever turns from it is sure to fall.

The individual who starts out with the intention of becoming a follower of Jesus must realize he has taken upon himself a

tremendous responsibility. He must first acquire a meek and humble attitude, always ready to follow in the Master's footsteps, just as Jesus surrendered to the will of His Father in everything.

When passing through trial he must learn to say, "Thy will be done," as Jesus prayed in Gethsemane. When faced with temptation he must answer the tempter with a firm and fearless "No," as the Record says Jesus always did. In short, he must be a living example of righteousness, going from strength to strength until, like Jesus, he becomes a perfect man.

A person who is truly a follower of Jesus will find he has a full-time job on his hands. He will have no time to be idle. No doubt there were plenty of idle men waiting for something to do about the Sea of Galilee when Jesus passed by, but He let the idlers lounge in the sun, and chose men who were already busily engaged. The idlers who were waiting for some great opportunity to present itself did not think the call of Christ any opportunity at all.

And as He called to them, He is calling to us, "Follow Me," and we shall miss the only opportunity in our life of ever doing anything worth remembering if we fail to heed that call.

It is important that a follower of Jesus perform his duty willingly and joyfully, never murmuring or complaining because his job is too hard, the work too confining, or the hours too long. Jesus said, "My yoke is easy, and my burden is light." If we really believe that, and become reconciled in everything, we can tread the way with ease and enjoy it as we go along.

It is natural for one to say in the hour of difficulty, "Everything is against me," but everything is not against us; every-

(Continued on page 26)

"Jesus, walking by the sea of Galilee, saw two brethren, Simon called Peter, and Andrew his brother, casting a net into the sea: for they were fishers. And he saith unto them, Follow me, . . . and they straightway left their nets, and followed him" (Matt. 4:18-20).

THE LORD'S PRAYER IN RHYME

Our Father who in Heaven art:
All hallowed be Thy Name.
Thy Kingdom come. Thy will be done
Throughout this earthly frame,
As cheerfully as 'tis by those
Who dwell with Thee on high.
Lord, let Thy bounty day by day
Our daily food supply.
As we forgive our enemies,
Thy pardon, Lord, we crave;
And in temptation leave us not,
But us from evil save.
For Kingdom, power and glory all
Belong, O Lord, to Thee;
Thine from eternity they were,
And Thine shall ever be.

Amen.