

God's Answers For Today

Gods Answers To Your Questions

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Introduction

WHAT greater feeling of relief can anyone have than that of the patient who unburdens his troubles to a sympathetic doctor, and receives the assurance of a speedy cure? When one of the many bodily ailments sets its distressing hand upon us, sapping our strength and burdening our minds with dismal fears and doubts, it is good to have a skilled doctor who will diagnose our trouble, and tell us what to do and what to take in order to recover health. Pains, fevers, and physical abnormalities are distressing things to the average person, and the medical man who can correctly identify the trouble and prescribe a certain remedy evokes feelings of deepest gratitude.

The world today is in need of a physician. Humanity is sick. There are symptoms of deep-rooted ailments, and no-one seems capable of providing a remedy. Indeed, the progress of time seems merely to complicate man's troubles, and to render human would be healers less and less hopeful.

But there is a Physician who has the answer to every human problem; one of whom King David said: "Thou knows my down sitting and mine uprising, Thou understands my thought afar off. Thou compasses my path and my lying down, and art acquainted with all my ways." Psalm 139:2, 3. He is fully acquainted with our condition, and knows our needs better than we know them ourselves.

Even the best of human doctors make mistakes. They are not to be blamed, for no me is infallible. But this Healer is infallible, for He is God.

He knows all about our problems and has the answer to them. He has never made a mistake. The dark, mysterious things are no mystery to Him. The most baffling problems which make "the whole head ... sick, and the whole heart faint," are as nothing to Him. Man's terrifying mountains, so gaunt and not scalable, are not even mole hills with God.

This heavenly Physician offers His services freely to all. "Come now, and let us reason together," is His merciful invitation. (Isaiah 1:18.) His diagnosis is always accurate, and His medicine never fails. He can dissolve all doubts, bring peace and happiness into the life, and can, even in this tumultuous modern world, provide "the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness."

But where do we seek God's answers to our questions? Where can we hear Him speak and thus benefit by what He offers? We simply need to turn to the Holy Bible of which the apostle Paul says: "All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and h profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness."2 Timothy 3:16. This holy Book contains all we need. No basic human problem or question, but has its answer here.

What lies ahead? Will irreparable chaos constitute the world's gloomy epilogue? Are we heading for a catastrophic cul-de-sac, or will we one day emerge completely from the dark tunnel of world unrest? And what of ourselves? Will death forever silence its victims? What about our sins? Is there any escape from their stranglehold? How can we get the most out of this life? Is there some secret to successful living? Is there a life to come? If there is, how can we prepare for it? How can we, ordinary men and women, ever get to know God? Is He really in control of events, or has He relinquished the reins to the devil? Who is the devil? Is there some great plan of personal and world salvation? What is it, and precisely how does it work?

Human answers to these questions there may be. They are as varied as they are numerous. But none are adequate, and their very diversity bewilders rather than satisfies. The Omniscient God alone can provide authoritative answers, and it is an evidence of His supreme love for His erring creatures, that He has revealed these answers through His "servants the prophets," who have recorded them for our benefit in the sacred Scriptures.

"Surely," remarks the prophet Amos, "the Lord God will do nothing, but He reveals His secret unto His servants the prophets." Amos 3:7. Again, speaking of the Bible, and of those men to whom God thus revealed His secrets, Peter says that holy men of God spoke as they were moved by the Holy Ghost."2 Peter 1:21.

John Flavel truly remarked that “bad men or devils would not have written the Bible, for it condemns them and their works-good men and angels could not have written it, for in saying it was from God when it was but their own invention, they would have been guilty of falsehood, and thus could not have- been good. The only remaining being who could have written it, is God- its real Author.”

Jesus Christ, whose main concern was to reveal the Father and to provide for our salvation, declared that one great reason some people err in their opinions and outlook, Was because they neglected the Bible. “You do err,” He said to the Sadducees, “not knowing the Scriptures.” Matthew 22:29. On an earlier occasion, hungry, weary, and sorely beset by the great Adversary, our Lord left on record for us all the frequently forgotten truth that “man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds out of the mouth of God.” Matthew 4:4. Yes, “by every word”! For an adequate answer to human problems, the whole Word of God is needful. There can be no policy more unwise than that of accepting some portions of the Bible and rejecting others. “Every word of God is pure “(Proverbs 30:5), and is absolutely needful if His answers to our many questions are to be correctly understood.

Let us turn to its pages and bear Him speak. As we read the message of Him who knows what is in the darkness “(Daniel 2:22), and acquaint ourselves with the diagnosis and advice of the great Physician, our testimony like David’s will be: “Thy Word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path.” Psalm 119:105. May we discover that “the entrance of Thy [God’s] words gives light; it gives understanding unto the simple.” Psalm 119:130.

May light from the sacred pages of Scripture shine with increasing brilliance in our hearts, bringing healing and gladness, and an outlook of trust and confidence in the Lord Jesus Christ.

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QUESTIONS ABOUT THE BIBLE

Is the Bible God’s Message to Man?

Is there anything really different about the Bible? Is it the message of man or the message of God? Is it, as some ~ an outdated book, having little if any real bearing on our day; or is it, as others claim, even more timely and vital today than ever before?

One thing is sure, if ever men and women needed the voice of divine authority, it is today. Many wonder what lies ahead. They fear the future. Gone are the days when future prospects sent the blood surging more joyously through the veins. The average forward look today, sees little but gloom. Says Professor C. E. Vullim: “Humanity is marching into the deadest of all dead ends. No-one has the slightest reason for supposing that human affairs are going to improve.”- Man and the, Atom, pages 25, 26.

We are living in “a world in which evil everywhere is prevailing over goodness, a world of decaying sanity.”- Ibid., page 12.

This tragic situation is all the more difficult to explain in the light of our advancing: knowledge. It was expected that scientific and educational advancement would bring a. added order. It was felt that the twentieth century, for sure, would bring enduring, tranquillity. But the past few years have brought disillusionment.

Many feel that science, in which men’s hopes were centered, has gone too far. Carried away with its enthusiasms and the spirit of adventure, yet lacking moral impetus, it has become incapable of either foreseeing or handling the consequences of its own achievements.

Ordinary men and women are bewildered. Science seems to tell them one thing, theology something else, and philosophy provides a variety of theories and assertions. Furthermore, national leaders seem no longer able to command the confidence they once did, for it is generally recognized that this old world's problems have grown too large and, unwieldy for men to handle.

What the world needs today above everything else is the voice of authority and certainty. If only God would speak His mind so that all could hear and understand. If only He would tell us the way out of our perplexities. If only He would draw aside the veil which hides the future from our view, and light our perilous pathway here on earth as we journey onward; then would our troubled hearts be at peace, and we could walk with confidence.

Yet the world generally is like the victim of a deadly disease who longs for help and healing, but who ignores the only effective medicine which is within his reach. Instead he seeks the services of misguided quacks and charlatans, with disastrous results. Thus it is that the heavenly Physician so often has occasion to complain as He did to His people of old: "You will not come to Me, that You might have life." John 5:40.

The quest for that kind of knowledge which, by its very nature, cannot be obtained by normal means, has always been alluring and fascinating. Every conceivable process of divination has been resorted to in order, as the term implies, "to see like a god;" and to discover, if possible, the will of the Almighty. This ardent search for an authoritative voice has assumed the most fantastic forms, such as the inspection of animal livers, chicken bones, knuckle bones, bears' teeth, tee totums, etc., among such primitive people as the Pacific islanders and the wild men of Borneo. While among civilized races the palmist, necromancer, magician, medium, and soothsayer find themselves in even greater demand than they were in King Nebuchadnezzar's day. But God does not speak' through the divining rod, the planchette, the crystal, or any other such means. For they are but hopeless substitutes for the true revelation of God's will for man and for the world.

This revelation is contained within the Holy Bible. The Bible is open and frank in its claim to be the genuine Word of God. More than two thousand times in the Old Testament do we have such statements as: "Thus said the Lord," "The Lord spoke," "The Spirit of the Lord spoke by me," "Moses wrote all the words of the Lord." The human writers of the Bible all claimed to be either recording God's messages or writing at His dictation. And one part of the Scriptures was so important as to have been actually written by God Himself. Our whole duty as responsible men and women who must one day face the final judgment, was outlined by God and written by His own hand on tables of stone. (Exodus 31:18) This great standard of conduct is the Ten Commandments. (Exodus 20:3-17; Ecclesiastes 12:13.)

There is no mock modesty about the Bible. Its voice is authoritative, for it is the voice of the true God. One looks in vain for any such pious as: "We may suppose that or "It may well be that or "It seems likely that." Such doubt-instilling statements abound in the writings of men, but the Bible is consistently dear and decided. It has confidence in what it says. Its claims are sweeping, its message is unmistakable. This in itself is one of the evidences we would expect to see in God's message to man.

The famous anthropologist, Sir Arthur Keith testified: "The Bible remained for me a book of books, still divine-but divine in the sense that all great books are divine which teach men how to live righteously." Such is the fallacious opinion of many well meaning folk. We do not deny that some human authors are helped by God in their work. But the very fact that their writings reveal so many and such great differences, of opinion, proves that the human element was very prominent as they wrote.

With the Bible this is not so. It dwarfs other books as completely as towering Everest dwarfs a humble hillock. The Bible is man's complete guide. Its inspiration is unique. It is the voice of God.

This must be so, or else the Bible is the greatest fraud. Its claims are either true or false. There is no possible way of getting around them or of explaining them away. There is no neutral position. Either we accept it as God's Word, or reject it as wholly untrue. But none could thus reject it, for the effect the Book produces and the influence for good it has wielded through the centuries, is one of the greatest proofs of its divine authorship. The generally accepted principle that "by their fruits You shall know them"(Matthew 7:20) applies just as logically to the Bible as to anything else. As an old Highlander once reasoned with Robert Buchanan: "I cannot argue with you. I cannot give facts and reasons. I cannot explain the philosophy of revelation. But this I know, that when I was a man of evil character the Bible got hold of me and quelled the tiger in me." Millions have likewise been able to prove that the Word of God is quick, and powerful." Hebrews 4:12.

Armed with the sacred Scriptures men and women of God have bravely entered the strongholds of heathenism, penetrating even the haunts of cannibals and head-hunters. The Bible's transforming power has driven "the tiger "from multitudes of those heathen hearts, and paved the way for a more civilized order. We have yet to bear of the writings of the ancient philosophers, or of such geniuses as Shakespeare or Dickens, or of such theorists as Karl Marx and Friedrich Nietzsche, making such complete and delightful transformations. The Bible has brought peace and happiness and freedom from the grossest sins, to thousands in every land. There is no safer, saner, kindlier, more wholesome company to be had, than that of men and women who love their Bibles.

One looks in vain for hospitals, orphanages, and old folk's homes in lands untouched by the Bible. Such institutions of mercy have come into being through Bible teaching. Not only for these but for whatever degree of decency, unity, and justice has been achieved by our modern civilization, the Bible must have the full credit.

The Bible's very persistence further demonstrates its divine nature. Through the centuries it has survived, shedding far and wide its benign influence, until today its circulation has reached an all-time peak. No book has been "disproved," "exploded," resisted, or ridiculed so many times as the Bible; yet the old Book lives on, sublimely doing its miraculous work of transformation in thousands of lives.

A man who built a wall wider than its height, explained his reason to be that should a strong wind blow his wall over, it would be even higher than it was at first. The Bible is much like that. Blow it over with the hurricanes of higher criticism, yet still it stands with undiminished power to protect and shelter those who read it.

Voltaire had no time for the Bible. He denied that any part of it was from God. He boasted that he would pave the way for its destruction, and that within a hundred years of his death it would be forgotten. Very few people read Voltaire today, yet added millions read the Bible. Within twenty-five years of Voltaire's death, his house was purchased by the Geneva Bible Society and used for storing Bibles; and his printing press was actually used to print an entire edition of the Bible.

Since that noted Frenchman's day, many Bible societies have come into being. Their presses have produced the Scriptures by the hundred million, and today the Old Book can be read in over a thousand languages. Since its inception, the British and Foreign Bible Society alone has produced over six hundred million copies of the Scriptures, being responsible for 808 of the 1,040 translations.

In view of the persistent opposition it has faced, such a situation is but one further proof that the Bible is indeed God's Word to man. As Isaiah declared; "The grass withers, the flower fades: but the Word of our God shall stand forever." Isaiah 40:8.

We would expect God's Word to man to be simple enough for all to grasp. A merciful God would be unfair if He outlined His purposes in terms which none but the keenest scholars could understand. And truly even a child can grasp the Bible's basic teachings; while at the same time there are profundities which provide limitless scope for even the most fertile brains.

Thank God for such a book. In a world of uncertainty here is an unquenchable light that will show us the way, a sign-post that will safely direct us, a transforming power that will purify our hearts, a source of healing for sickly souls, an inexhaustible storehouse of wisdom, sanity, hope, joy, and gladness. "The statutes of the Lord are right, rejoicing the heart: the commandment of the Lord is pure, enlightening the eyes." Psalm 19:8.

"O earth, earth, earth, hear the Word of the Lord." Jeremiah 22:29. "Do you know a book that you are willing to put under your ear for a pillow when you lie dying? That is the book you want to study while you are living. There is but one such book in the world "the Bible", God's Word to man.

Can Prove the Bible True?

GOD has given us reasoning minds, and it is these which most distinguish us from the unreasoning animals. Our human tendencies to question and to verify the "why" and "wherefore," are God-given. Our capacity to doubt is not without its divinely ordained purpose. Indeed, this very characteristic was designed by God so that our choice of Him as our Deliverer, and of His Word as our guide, should not be unreasoning and credulous, but a result of our conviction of the truth. God could have no pleasure in the adoration of automatons. No more than a mother or father could have pleasure in the embraces of a doll which could be wound up and automatically set to kiss, caress, and cheerfully respond, when given appropriate impulses. An acceptance of God, and of His Word, the Bible, which is blind and unquestioning, could give Him little satisfaction.

God expects us to choose Him and His Word not because we have been told to do so, but because we have a personal conviction that it is the only right thing to do.

Can we hope to obtain such a conviction? Is there some infallible test that we can apply and that will appeal to our reason? There is.

God knew that good moral teaching, wise laws, and reassuring promises, in spite of their undeniable influence for good, would not be sufficient in themselves to provide proof of inspiration. For after all, why couldn't these things be merely the work of men? There have been many philosophers, many lawgivers, many poets, and many teachers. Why shouldn't they just as rightly claim divine inspiration as the ones who penned the Bible?

To settle all doubts, God has put into His Word something which is beyond the capacity of even the greatest human genius to produce. He has given us prophecy. The Bible offers this prophetic power as proof of its divine inspiration.

Within its pages are hundreds of prophecies with thousands of details; prophecies not vague and ambiguous, but rather couched in the clearest language. Not just short term prophecies whose “fulfillment” could somehow be engineered by the “prophet,” but many of them long-term panoramas covering thousands of years in their broad sweep. Most of them have already been fulfilled, though some still stretch on into the future, lighting the way for all who are wise enough to take heed.

Here is the crucial challenge in the Bible’s own language: “Produce your cause, said the Lord; bring forth your strong reasons, said the King of Jacob. Let them bring them forth, and show us what shall happen: let them show the former things, what they be, that we may consider them, and know the latter end of them; and declare us things for to come. Show the things that are to come hereafter, that we may know that you are gods.” Isaiah 41:21-23. Again, the true God, who claims to be speaking to us through the inspired writers of the Bible, says: “New things do I declare: before they spring forth I tell you of them.” Isaiah 42:9. This is not merely an attempt to awaken and satisfy human curiosity; but to offer to man the most convincing proof that there is but one true God, and that it is He who is speaking through the Bible.

There are, of course, sublimer things about the Lord than His ability to prophesy. His creative and redemptive power, His love and compassion, are of deeper importance to us than His prophetic power. But whereas the former may be falsely yet plausibly simulated by false gods, none can lay claim to prophetic power-nor have they ever done so. For prophetic power can so easily be put to a practical test.

Prophecy then, is the unique thing that God offers as a dissolver of doubts, and as a means of fortifying man’s faith in the Bible as a true revelation of His purposes for mankind. We will here survey one or two of the minor prophecies, reserving certain of the greater ones for subsequent chapters.

TYRE

In Ezekiel’s day the seaport of Tyre enjoyed great prosperity, as it had done for many centuries. Tyre was “mistress of the seas,” and commerce from the very ends of the earth flowed into the island city. The Tyreans preferred money-making to war, and their industry and enterprise enabled their merchants to take their place among the princes and noble of the earth. (Isaiah 23:8.) But the people left God out of their reckoning, and were guilty of great sin. They committed acts of cruelty against the Israelites whom they sold as slaves to the Greeks, and whose land they despoiled. (Joel 3:5,6)

Because of their failure to reform, God caused Ezekiel to prophesy against them. God said: “I am against thee, O Tyrus, and I will cause many nations to come up against thee.... And they shall destroy the walls of Tyrus, and break down her towers: I will also scrape her dust from her, and make her like the top of a rock.” Ezekiel 26: 3, 4. Thus was the destruction of a city which had successfully survived two thousand years, predicted by the prophet. The blow was to be complete, for the prophecy went on: “I will make thee like the top of a rock: thou shall be a place to spread nets upon; thou shall be built no more: for I the Lord have spoken it.” Verse 14.

Doubtless the people either laughed, or ignored God’s message entirely. They certainly were not perturbed by it. They had survived attacks from Shalmaneser, Sennachefib, Esarhaddon, and Ashurbanipal, and had recovered from each blow. Thus would it be in the future, they thought. The main city, situated as it was on an island, was of unusual strength.

King Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon vainly besieged it for thirteen years (585-573 BC) but Tyre was neither destroyed nor captured, nor was it seriously damaged, though the inhabitants eventually came to terms and agreed to acknowledge Nebuchadnezzar’s overlordship.

Two hundred and forty years later, came Alexander the Great from Greece. He found Tyre still flourishing, and too proud to yield to the conqueror. Emboldened by the peculiar strength of their position as an island city, they resisted the Greek attack. But refusing to by-pass so stubborn a city, Alexander spent seven months building a mole from the mainland to the island, so that he could launch a full-scale assault. He built the mole by collecting all the building material which once formed old Tyre, and depositing it in the sea. The demand for material was so great that the site of the old city was literally scraped “like the top of a rock.”

Thus was the causeway completed and the island converted into an isthmus, as it is even to this day. Alexander took Tyre, but again it recovered, and it was still a prosperous city at the time of our Lord, three hundred years later. The complete fulfillment of Ezekiel’s prophecy was being delayed.

For over a thousand more years Tyre survived till the time of the Crusades. Furious battles were fought there between Christians and Moslems, and the city finally fell in 1291. This really was the end foreseen and described by the Bible prophecy. Tyre was reduced to a heap of rubble, which was mostly removed and carried away to nearby Beirut, Joppa, and Acre, for building purposes. The French skeptic, C. F. Volney in Travels, volume 2, page 212 tells of his visit to the site of Tyre, and how he saw the fishermen spreading their nets to dry on the few remaining ruined fragments of that proud city which once was “mistress of the seas.”

How wonderfully true is God's Word. Tyre is now "like the top of a rock; "it is a place "for the spreading of nets." And though it is an ideal location for a city, in harmony with the final word of the prophetic message it has never been rebuilt. "Thou shalt he built no more," said the inspired prophet.

And this prophecy of Tyre is but one of many which can be used as a means of testing the truth of the Bible.

BABYLON

We think of the lordly city of Babylon. In King Nebuchadnezzar's day it was not only the wonder of the world, it was the world's capital. Here were the gold-embellished royal palaces, the magnificent temple of Belus, and the famous Hanging Gardens. Here was a teeming city of two hundred square miles, filled with ornate buildings, and surrounded by gigantic protective walls fifty-four miles long, 344 feet high, and eighty six feet broad-wide enough for a four-horse chariot to ride along its top, and to turn. Through the city ran the great river Euphrates, flanked with busy quays. Ibis golden city seemed to be here to stay.

Small wonder that Nebuchadnezzar was unable to suppress his pride as he looked upon this man-made beauty spot from one of the royal terraces. Said he: "Is not this great Babylon, that I have built ... by the might of my power, and for the honor of my majesty?" "Daniel 4:30.

But God, through His servant, prophesied against Babylon. "Babylon shall become heaps" said Jeremiah, "without an inhabitant." Jeremiah 51:37. And the prophet added It shall never be inhabited, neither shall it be dwelt in from generation to generation." He also declared: "Neither shall the Arabian pitch tent there; neither shall the shepherds make their fold there." Isaiah 13:20. God visualized the time-and such declarations must have seemed utmost folly to the haughty Chaldeans-when this haughty city would be the abode of "wild beasts of the desert; "and owls shall dwell there." Isaiah 13:21. Jeremiah added that Babylon would be desolate forever," and a dwelling place for jackals [Moffatt]." Jeremiah 51:26, 27.

To the Chaldeans, such complete extinction was as absurd as it was unthinkable, and such sweeping statements seemed merely symptoms of the jealousy and envy of those who surveyed the unparalleled glory of this dream city on the Euphrates. Though undoubtedly the majority of the Babylonians never even deigned to consider the menage which came from the God of the despised Judeans.

God's prophetic Word, however, has always proved to be sublimely unaffected by the reactions and opinions of men. Prophets like Isaiah and Jeremiah might be imprisoned, persecuted, stoned, or "sawn asunder," and their messages resented and repudiated, but their prophetic utterances have always proved true.

What is Babylon today? Where is the golden city, the "beauty of the Chaldees' excellency?" Isaiah 13:19. Most of those two hundred square miles of human splendor lie deeply buried beneath the desert earth. The site of the city, and the few unearthed ruins, are left severely alone by the Arabs who believe that the place is the abode of evil spirits. Shepherds avoid the place, and no native dare pitch tent there because, as superstition has it, "of the multitude of evil spirits with which it is haunted."-Memoirs, Rich, page 27.

The only "dwellers "are as the prophecy said, jackals, hyenas, and other wild creatures. No human being now dwells there, and indeed such is the nature of the ground that no one could live there if he wanted to. "Ruins, composed like those of Babylon, of heaps of rubbish impregnated with nitre, cannot be cultivated."(Ibid. page 16) "The decomposing materials of a Babylonian structure doom the earth on which they perish to a lasting sterility."-Travels, Porter, Vol. 2, page 391. (Quoted in Will the Old Book Stand?)

Sit thou silent, was Isaiah's prophetic command to the haughty Babylon. (Isaiah 47:5), an unthinkable condition for so vast and busy a place. But today, the pride of the Chaldeans is nothing but buried heaps, as silent as the grave, and impressive only by its barrenness.

All this did not happen in a moment. There was no great elemental upheaval to fulfil the many prophecies. For hundreds of years the great city survived, and the complete fulfillment was delayed until centuries after the crucifixion of Christ. The founding of the nearby city of Seleucia, and the transporting of the bulk of the inhabitants, was perhaps the greatest cause of Babylon's material decay.

H. V. Morton tells of his visit to the ruins in the 'thirties. He was driven the sixty miles from Baghdad in an Arab taxi-cab. He says: "I knew we were drawing near when we crossed a single railway track running over the sand, and I saw a notice board bearing, in English and Arabic, the words: ' Babylon Halt.' Through Bible Lands, page 64.

Could humiliation be more complete? Once the world's mightiest metropolis, and certainly the most splendid city ever built by man, yet now "a place which even the local trains pass with a derisive whistle."-Ibid., page 64.

These prophecies of Tyre and Babylon, are but minor examples of the Bible's striking prophetic messages. Of far greater concern to us are the prophecies which focus on our day, and which throw their penetrating beam on the great events of the immediate future. These we will consider in later chapters. They are striking, convincing, awe-inspiring, and remarkably hopeful.

Wise is the apostle Paul's advice: "Never disdain prophetic revelations but test them all."1 Thessalonians 5:20,21 (Moffatt). For prophecy is the great means whereby the Christian knows that his Bible is different from, and superior to, the many other "holy--books of the world. It provides the conclusive answer to those who question. Prophecy proves that the Bible is superior to the Muslims' Koran, the Buddhists' Tripitaka, the Confucianists' Tao-Teh-King, the Parsees' Zend-Avesta, the Hindus' Vedanta Sutras, Puranas, and Tantras, for none of these "holy "books provides any such means of testing its genuineness. Prophecy is the unique feature which forever establishes the fact that the Bible is truly God's Word to man.

God has not forsaken the world. He seeks to guide man's faltering feet, and to lead him to conditions of bliss which baffle the descriptive powers of even the ablest writers. Wise are we if we heed the ancient admonition: "Believe in the Lord your God, so shall You be established; believe His prophets, so shall You prosper."2 Chronicles 20:20.

Does Science Disprove the Bible?

SCIENCE does not disprove the Bible. In spite of a popular idea that the Bible is unscientific, the fact is that real science proves the Bible true.

The word "science" comes from the Latin word *scientia*, which means "knowledge." Now if we accept this as the meaning of the word, then there can be no doubt that science and the Bible are in perfect harmony.

The pity is that quite apart from known facts, there is a multitude of so-called scientific "theories which also pass as science. Some of these theories tell a very different story from that of the Bible; and because of this, it is wrongly assumed by some people that science and the Bible do not agree. The fact is that true science and the Bible do agree. It is the unwarranted theories which often differ. We must therefore, always be careful to distinguish between "science, falsely so-called"(1 Timothy 6:20) and genuine science. The former departs from the Bible story, but the latter never does.

The Bible does not claim to be a science text-book, but it does claim to be scientifically accurate. Indeed, if it could be definitely proved that any statement of the Scriptures were unscientific, then we could no longer accept it as the Word of God. For God is omniscient-He knows everything; and it is unlikely that in any Book inspired by Him, He would permit falsehoods or fables to be included. The God of heaven designed that a study of the facts of science should strengthen, not weaken, our faith in His Word.

CREATION

When we begin to consider the supposed conflict between science and the Bible, we think at once of the record of Creation. The Bible teaches that God made the world and all within it, including every living creature, in six literal days. (Exodus 20:11) This claim is so important that it is included in the one brief section of the Bible which was actually written by God Himself. (Deuteronomy 9:10.) In his prayer, Nehemiah acknowledged God's great act of creation. "Thou, even Thou, art Lord alone;" he said, "Thou has made heaven, the heaven of heavens, with all their host, the earth, and all things that are therein, the seas, and all that is therein, and Thou preserves them all." Nehemiah 9:6. Furthermore, the writer of the epistle to the Hebrews declares The works were finished from the foundation of the world." Hebrews 4:1

Everything owes its being to God. All was made in six days. God spoke, and it was so, and "the works were finished." Of course, no-one can prove this. But not even the most learned scientist can disprove it. The very nature and time of these miraculous happenings makes proof impossible. It is "through faith we understand that the worlds were framed by the word of God, so that things which are seen were not made of things which do appear." Hebrews 11:1 God required no pre-existing matter to produce the marvels of creation.

EVOLUTION

But you ask: "Does not evolution disprove the story of creation and of the fall? (Genesis 1-3) Indeed, no. Evolution proves nothing whatever except the truth of the Bible prophecy which foresaw its rise in the "last days," and the reluctance of some people to give God His rightful place. (2 Peter 3:3-6; Romans 1:28.) Evolution is no more than a very interesting theory, and the so-called evidences for it can more easily be explained in the light of the Bible record of a special creation, and the subsequent flood. (Genesis 7) Furthermore, the fact that some of the most eminent scientists and thinkers have rejected evolution-like the late Sir Ambrose Fleming, F.R.S., who was a convinced believer in the Bible story of creation-shows that the so-called proofs are no proofs at all. They are merely facts which can just as easily, and often more reasonably, be made to harmonize with the Bible.

Professor Fleischmann, the noted zoologist of Erlangen, Bavaria, though formerly believing the evolution theory, later rejected it as unscientific. He said: "The Darwinian theory has not a single fact to confirm it in the realm of science. It is not the result of scientific research, but purely the product of the imagination." And Professor G. W. Wright, geologist of Ohio, declared that "the doctrine of evolution is one-tenth bad science and nine-tenths bad philosophy." Even Charles Darwin, the greatest apostle of evolution admitted that "a recurrent tragedy of science is the killing of some beautiful theory by an ugly fact."(Noah's Flood: Fact or Fiction? page 22) The pity is that the ugly fact, not the beautiful theory, is usually the thing to suffer.

Evolution is so strongly established today, however, that those who reject it are looked upon as eccentrics. Yet many who teach it are themselves in doubt, but dare not express their doubts. To do so might easily cost them their positions. It would be “professional suicide for a biologist to attack organic evolution.”(Is Evolution Proved? page 8.) And as Dwight Parkman, Professor of Anatomy at Harvard University, wrote: “The tyranny of the Zeitgeist [the spirit of the age] in the matter of evolution is overwhelming to a degree which outsiders have no idea. Not only does it influence (as I admit it does in my own case) our manner of thinking, but there is oppression as in the days of the Terror. How very few of the leaders of science dare to tell the truth concerning their own state of mind.”-Thoughts of a Catholic Anatomist, page 20.

What precisely is this theory which seem to be so fashionable; and what exactly does it teach? Briefly, it teaches that the world and all within it slowly developed out of a very nebulous beginning, as a result of “mindless chance.” That somehow, when the world assumed a normal consistency, shape, and temperature, the first living cells were spontaneously produced, and that these single-celled creatures were actually the forerunners of all the insects, fishes, birds, animals, and human beings in the world today.

The evolution story of how man developed is a very interesting one. It is claimed that he began hundreds of millions of years ago as a diminutive speck of protoplasm, though how this came into being, no scientist can tell. The gap between the inanimate world and living beings cannot be bridged. Professor du Nouy is frank enough to admit that “it is totally impossible to account scientifically for all phenomena pertaining to life. “We are faced with a hiatus in our knowledge. There is a gap between living and non-living matter which we have not been able to bridge.”(Human Destiny, page 36.) And later this scientist warns us: “Let us not give in to the temptation of saying, many things can happen in a hundred million years. If nothing happens in a year, there is no reason why, by multiplying what has not happened one million or a hundred million times, something will happen at the end of that time.”-Ibid., page 76.

Undismayed by this fact, however, the story proceeds with an account of how this single-celled creature eventually grew into a sand worm. One of those early sand worm found himself the possessor of a kind of “creative instability,” and an urge to develop greater intelligence, dignity, and complexity. Such a one “may have been our ancestor.”(Human Destiny, page 89.) Centuries rolled by, and the progressive progeny of this ambitious sand worm is said to have developed into fish. Now, as the anatomical features of fish and men are basically the same, so the evolutionists feel free to teach that “man is a modified fish.” “To the fundamental fish, therefore, we owe a limitless debt,” claims Professor William Howells, in Mankind So Far.

The theory continues with a gripping story of how one branch of those early fishes developed a yearning desire to investigate the great land masses. According to Professor du Nouy, it was as though some great goal had to be reached, which was “the real reason, the inspiration of evolution.”-Human Destiny, page 74.

How all this came about is a question for which there is no explanation, and of course, not the slightest proof. Such questions seem in no wise to upset the story-tellers, however. This early ancestor by some miraculous means which no scientist can account for, grew legs and lungs, like the mud springer and other lung-fish of today.

Professor Howells suggests that what really set things moving was the fact that certain of those fish which had the “evolution urge” found themselves isolated in evaporating lakes. Hence they were forced to struggle overland in search of other lakes, or die. (Mankind So Far, page 22) The unusual purpose for which their front fins were used at this time, is supposed in some miraculous way, to have begun in them a process of development which in a matter of a few hundred million years was to lead to the formation of the human leg!

Thus this “ancestor” reached an amphibious stage, able, like frogs, toads, newts, and salamanders, to live in water and on land. His next great step was to develop some means of depositing his eggs on land instead of in the water where they were so easily destroyed. The urge to take such a step led at last to the art of producing eggs which had shells around them so as to prevent dehydration in the sun. Having perfected-by some miraculous means-this art, our “ancestor “had reached the reptile stage; for eggs that could be safely deposited on land, and hatched, constituted the main difference between the reptiles and amphibians. This “reptile period” was supposedly the time when the mighty dinosaurs roamed this earth, one type of which-the pterodactyl even invaded the air.

The story proceeds that owing to an unnatural habit of eating their neighbors’ eggs which some of the dinosaurs acquired, the progressive “forebears “of the human race began to realize the need for an even safer means of producing young than egg laying. Hence the development of the mammal, with its unique method of bearing its young.

The reptiles had improved on the amphibians because they succeeded in providing a shell in which their young could develop before being hatched. But the mammals went a big step further in that they managed to postpone the time of “laying “so that it coincided with the time of “hatching “their young. The mammals furthermore succeeded in developing mammary glands which produced milk for the infant offspring, acquiring at the same time strong parental emotions which assured that the babies would not be prematurely abandoned by their parents.

As a reason for all this, scientists can offer nothing better than that of an “impulse toward achieving a high development.”(Mankind So Far, page 34.) We may well ask: How was the actual change-over made between egg-laying and the advanced form of childbearing of the mammal? A continuance of the reptile practice of egg-laying while at the same time the mammal womb and breast and milk glands were being developed and prepared for action, is unthinkable. Yet such must have been the case unless some reptile genius, by means of a supreme effort, managed to produce a fully equipped mammal in one attempt. If evolution is true, one of these explanations is bound to be correct, yet the latter is even more unthinkable than the former.

Another major difference between the reptile and the mammal is the fact that mammals have warm blood. Reptiles and lower orders are incapable of retaining their body heat, but assume the temperature of their surroundings. It has been proved that all the biochemical processes necessary for high efficiency, muscular activity, and nervous co-ordination of the mammal, function best in a constant temperature of about 100 degrees Fahrenheit. Scientists suggest that it was to conserve his body heat that our early “forebear “developed the kind of legs which-unlike those of the reptile” lifted his body from the ground, at the same time and for the same purpose, growing a covering of hair.

But how did warm-bloodedness come about? No scientist can say. Howells says that it will probably “remain as mysterious as the reptile egg.”-Ibid., page 33.

It will remain a mystery for those who neglect the simple record of the Bible which says that it was God who created all things, and who “made the bent of the earth after his kind, and cattle after their kind, and every thing that creeps upon the earth after his kind.” Genesis 1:25. Not one of the wonderful “developments “of the evolution story can be explained by science, and the few fragments of it we have here been able to survey, illustrate how unlikely the whole thing is. It is far more reasonable to believe that an intelligent God made everything, than that nothing at all made everything! Both the Bible story of creation and evolution require faith, but the latter demands infinitely more than the former.

Unperturbed, however, by the hundreds of problems which cannot be explained, the theory goes on to describe the development of man. In the process of time the story runs-the apes together with our supposed ape-like ancestors appeared. They differed from the monkey and other animal in that they were invariably upright in posture, and because of this they had-by some inexplicable means!-succeeded in readjusting their internal organs so that they were now suspended from the chest. For locomotion they depended mainly on their arms since they lived in the trees, and swung from branch to branch. Hence the highly developed hands.

In man’s supposed ancestor, however, was a desire to free his hands. He came to depend less and less on them for locomotion, and more and more on his legs. This gave rise to one of man’s specialized possessions-the human foot. At least, that is the theorists’ view. The hands were now free for a huge variety of purposes, which led directly-of all things-to the reduction of the snout. For previously the snout had to do almost everything in connection with feeding and investigating, and needed, therefore, to be long in order to put enough distance before

the eyes for satisfactory sight during investigation operations. The hands were now free to do all this, so the snout gradually became smaller, and in time developed the more acceptable size and shape which we have today! (Mankind So Far, page 89.) But man’s specialties include not only his hands and feet. but also his brain. Whence came this wonderful mechanism which lifts man so completely above the beasts of the field? One story explains that the muscles of man’s shrinking jaw relaxed their constrictive grip on the skull vault, thus giving the brain its chance. The brain at once became furrowed with thought, and the brow bulged with cerebration. (Apes, Men, and Morons, page 67.)

One scientist, baffled by the many problems of the evolution story, remarked that in investigating such things as brain development, “we, have simply landed again in the quagmires of why in evolution.”-Mankind So Far, page 93.

THE “MISSING LINK”

But what about the “missing link”? you ask. The answer is that no “missing link” has ever been found. The hideous looking creatures we see in science text-books and museums are merely models which have been reconstructed from a few fragments of f~ bones. One of these, the pilthecanthropus erectus (erect ape-man), or Java Man, has forces been regarded as the greatest proof of the evolution theory; quoting Sir Arthur Keith in the Encyclopedia Britannica, Vol. 14, page 763. “The discovery which throws most light on the evolutionary progress of man was made in Java during 1891-92 by Professor Eugene Dubois.” He describes the doctor’s discovery as a “real missing link,” and that “he actually caught the human brain in the act of evolving.”

All Dubois found while working near the village of Trinil on the Solo River was a fossil tooth, and then, ten feet away, two or three small fragments of a skull. A year later he unearthed a fossil thigh bone forty feet removed from the place where he found the tooth. These fragments of bone were at once hailed as the “missing link “! Yet, as the Natural History Museum Guide declares: “The remains in this case are so fragmentary that they admit of more than one interpretation.” Some scientists believe the bones to be those of a giant gibbon, an opinion later held by Dr. Dubois himself.

The surprising thing is that Dr. Dubois did actually discover two fairly complete fossil skulls in 1892-Amown as the Wadjak skulls. But because they were skulls of intelligent human beings, their discovery was kept secret until 1920. The reason was that they would have completely nullified the effect of the other fragments which were hailed with such delight by the theorists. Sir Arthur Keith applauds this well-kept secret, declaring that knowledge of these skulls “would have overtaxed the resilience of the anthropologists, like the chameleon that was put on a Scotch plaid.”-Mankind So Far, page 191.

But the theorists say they have other fossil fragments that support their story. They enumerate the remains from Pekin, Njara, Pilttdown, Heidelberg, and Rhodesia. But none of these provides any trustworthy evidence. As Professor Howells remarks: “Fossil men seem all to be touched with a curse worse than that of Tutankhamen, giving rise to endless arguments and indiscretions. - Ibid., page 136.

And commenting on the reconstruction of these “fossil men “he says that” there is no possible way of judging what the soft parts were like, while at the same time these soft parts determine the whole impression which the thing creates. On the same skull two different and equally possible coverings of flesh can make the individual look brutal and apish or human and refined.”(Ibid., page 128) This admission needs no comment.

Innumerable skulls have been found all over Europe, of the so-called Neanderthal man. Their structure is such as to suggest a forward leaning of the head”-distinct from our upright position. They have a rather pronounced brow ridge and a low forehead, but the fact is that they were endowed with larger brains than ours today.

Fossils of other men, who were obviously intelligent, well built, and highly civilized have been found in good quantities. These are known as the Cro-Magnon men. They don't help the evolution story much, for in many respects they were better specimens of humanity than are we today. It was thought at first that these were advanced types of men who lived long ages after the brutish Neanderthals. But imagine the theorists' consternation when remains of Neanderthals and Cro-Magnons were found together in the district of Mount Carmel in Palestine. Evidence of interbreeding was clear. Says Professor Howells: “It is difficult indeed to understand the Mount Carmel skeletons, and they are likely to remain a puzzle for some time.”-Ibid., page 203.

Candidly there is no puzzle except for the evolutionist. The simple explanation is that the Neanderthals were a degenerate type who lived at the same time as the super intelligent Cro-Magnons. Sir Ambrose Fleming said: “We can regard the Cro-Magnons as the antediluvian men of the Bible narrative. The Neanderthals can then be explained as standing in the same relationship as the Australian bushmen stand to Europeans.”

Thus we see that the evolution story, while a very intriguing one, is certainly not factual. Theorists claim that though they have no answers for any of such basic questions as have here been mentioned, one “proof “that all creatures have developed from a common ancestor is the similarity in our bodily structure.

For instance, “the forelimb of a frog, the paddle of a turtle, the wing of a bird, the foreleg of a horse, the flipper of a whale, the wing of a bat, the arm of a man, exhibit in diverse guise the same essential parts, twisted into different forms for different uses, but always of the same fundamental type. There is essential similarity in the important bones, and considerable resemblance in the musculature, innervation, and blood supply.”(New Universal Encyclopedia, page 3,200, Art. “Evolution: The Shaping of life Forms.”) The writer later remarks: “It is difficult to understand this adherence to type except on the theory of the actual flesh and blood relationship of the back-boned animals.” These similarities are thus looked upon as some of the strongest proofs of a common ancestry. But such a conclusion is not justified.

If such a conclusion were really valid, then it could no longer be maintained that the Bible is true, for the record of Creation is clear that all the main types of animals and other creatures emerged from the hand of our great Creator on the fifth and sixth days of the world's first week. “And God said, Let the waters bring forth abundantly the moving creature that hath life, and fowl that may fly above the earth in the open firmament of heaven. And God created great whales, and every living creature that moves, which the waters brought forth abundantly, after their kind, and every winged fowl after his kind: and God saw that it was good.... And the evening and the morning were the fifth day. And God said, Let the earth bring forth the living creature after his kind, cattle, and creeping thing, and beast of the earth after his kind: and it was so. And God made the beast of the earth after his kind, and cattle after their kind, and every thing that creeps upon the earth after his kind: and God saw that it was good. And God said, Let Us make man in Our image, after Our likeness: and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creeps upon the earth. So God created man in His own image, in the image of God created He him; male and female created He them. And God saw every thing that He had made, and, behold, it was very good. And the evening and the morning were the sixth day.” Genesis 1:20,21,23-28,31.

Such anatomical similarities as have been mentioned are very easily understood and explained in the light of this inspired record. They testify, not to a common ancestry, but to the one great Master Mind who worked to a master plan. The Creator made all back-boned

creatures according to His basic plan, yet providing the needed modifications in each case so that there might be infinite variety in the world.

Thus we find this popular theory of evolution without any real proof, and it presents a quagmire of problems which no one can solve. As Paul Lemoine, editor of *Encyclopedie Franfaise*, remarks: "The theories of evolution constitute a dogma which all the world continues to teach: but each in his specialty, zoologist or botanist, comes to the conclusion that none of the available explanations are adequate. Evolution is impossible. It is necessary to say this in order that future generations may orient their researches in another fashion." - Volume 5, pages 82-88 (1938 ed.).

WHAT REAL HARM IS THERE?

You may ask, "What real harm is there in evolution?" Just this. The teaching of evolution cannot exist side by side with the Word of God. It is not merely something which has no connection with the Bible; it contradicts the Bible.

The Bible gives man a noble, upright, perfect beginning (Genesis 1:26,27)-evolution traces man's ancestry back to a microbe in the primeval mud. The Bible tells of man's fall in the garden of Eden (Genesis 3:1-20) Evolution says this story is merely symbolic of man's evolving conscience. The Bible says that man is a sinner and that he must one day answer for his sins (Psalm 53:3; Isaiah 53:6; Romans 3:23; 1 John 1:8)-evolution says sin is merely a relic of our animal nature for which we are no more responsible than we are for the color of our eyes, and that the future judgment is a myth. The Bible tells of the Savior whose sacrifice on Calvary was essential to the redemption of man (John 8:24; Acts 4:12; 1 Corinthians 3:11)-evolution explains away sin as a perfectly normal state of development, and denies the need of any Savior. Evolution refuses to accept the possibility of such miracles as the incarnation (John 1:1-3, 14), the resurrection (Acts 2:23, 24; 3:14, 15; 17:2, 3; Romans 1:4), and ascension of Jesus (Acts 1:9), even though, as we have shown, the acceptance of its own theory requires an even greater credulity. Thus the teachings of evolution are the very antithesis of the basic doctrines of the Bible. The theorists have, though perhaps unwittingly, "changed the glory of the uncorruptible God [i.e. His acts of creation] into an image made like to corruptible man, and to birds, and four-footed beasts, and creeping things [i.e. the evolution theory]." Romans 1:23. Thus they "have changed the truth of God into a lie and worshipped and served the creature more than the Creator." Verse 25.

If the Bible is true, then the basic conceptions of the scientific theorists are false, and evolution is founded on shifting sand. If evolution is true, then all the basic teachings of God's Word are false. There is no compromise.

Fortunately, the Bible contains within itself overwhelming proof of its inspired nature. This we have already seen, and shall see much more dearly in later chapters. Once we are convinced that the Bible is authoritative, then we can accept by faith those biblical records which, by their very nature, we are unable to prove. Such a record is that of creation. "Through faith we understand that the worlds were framed by the word of God." Hebrews 11:3.

To understand scientific facts, we need to see them in the light of the Bible. Invariably they are in perfect harmony. Unless this is done, only barren theories will result. As someone has truly said: "Godless science reads nature only as Milton's daughters did Hebrew, rightly syllabbling the sentences, but utterly ignorant of the meaning."

Science does not disprove the Bible. "True science and inspiration are in perfect harmony." That which does conflict with God's Word is not science, but unwarranted theory. A safe rule when assessing the value of any teaching which runs counter to the Scriptures is: "Let God be true." Romans 3:4. We have ample reason for believing His Word.

Let us hopefully look up, recognizing that the marvels of nature in the heavens above and on the earth beneath, declare God's glory not the accidental out workings of mindless chance. (Psalm 19: 1.)

Is the Bible Trustworthy

A CHAIN is no stronger than its weakest link. if weak links could be found in the Bible record, we would rightly question its claim to being more than a human product. Any weaknesses would be regarded as proofs that the writers were little different from others.

But the Bible contains no such weak links as legends, myths, or fairy tales. The psalmist was inspired to write: "Thy Word is true from the beginning." Psalm 119:160. Trace back the chain of Bible history as far as you can, and you will discover no link anywhere of which it can be said: "This link is faulty, the historians and scientists have proved it so."

Of course, a great deal of the Bible's intensely interesting record has been questioned by the critics, and from time to time certain sections of the Scriptures have been "blacklisted "as myths. In fact, there is scarcely a chapter of the Bible which has escaped the gruelling criticism, and subsequent condemnation, of the skeptics.

But the Bible has a habit of outliving the skeptics and their criticisms, and as real knowledge advances, the list of biblical “mistakes” becomes smaller and smaller instead of bigger and bigger. This, truly, is a remarkable fact. Yet as Bible prophecy itself foresaw, such a fact by no means diminishes the enthusiasm with which some people maintain the view that much of the Bible-in fact, certain of its most vital parts-is legendary.

For more than a century archaeologists have been uncovering buried cities and buried remains of former civilizations. Especially has their interest centered around the ancient lands of the Bible, where they have worked with remarkable success. Places, peoples, and individuals, which figure prominently in the Bible, yet which earlier critics claimed did not exist because no other historical record made reference to them, have been brought to light by the spade of the archaeologist. Great mounds of debris have buried deeply and held fast for centuries their grim secrets in those Bible lands. Many of these secrets are today revealed for us to see. And the verdict every time is: “The Bible is true, after all.” Not a single stone, pot, bone, building, inscription, or any other of the hundreds of thousands of relics which have come to light, serves to throw the slightest doubt on what the Bible says. Instead, their unanimous testimony is: “Thy Word is true from the beginning.”

Few stories seemed more fabulous than that of how Joshua led the Israelites across the passage through the River Jordan into the promised land of Palestine, and overthrew that Canaanite stronghold, the city of Jericho. This beautiful palm tree city was strongly fortified. It commanded the fords of the lower valley of the River Jordan, and also the passes to the western hills. For Israel to advance, it was essential for them to conquer the city. Led by the unarmed priests with their trumpets and sacred ark of the covenant which contained the Law of God, the people of Israel were commanded by God through His servant Joshua to march around the city daily for a week, and on the final day to “compass the city seven times.” Joshua 6:4. This was not a difficult task, since the walled part of the city was only 700 yards around. Finally they were to raise their voices in a mighty shout as the priests blew their trumpets.

Doubtless there were some who felt this procedure to be stupid and futile, and others would be discouraged by the “hopeless” prospects of conquering such a place. But Joshua urged them into action. God’s commands were obeyed, and as, on that last day, the air was rent by the trumpet blast and the roar of a myriad voices, Jericho’s walls staggered and reeled and completely collapsed. (Verse 20.)

Israel were commanded to destroy everything in the city, and to take no booty whatever-a hard command in view of the wealth of the place. Only Rahab “the harlot “(or innkeeper) who sheltered and fed the Israelite spies (Joshua 2), together with her family, were to be saved. Thus “they burnt the city with fire, and all that was therein: only the silver, and the gold they put into the treasury of the house of the Lord.” Joshua 6:24. But they” saved Rahab the harlot alive.”

Such is the story, and because of its colorfulness, many of its details were questioned. It was thought unwise to regard the Jericho victory as sober history until the 1930’s when Professor John Garstang, together with over a hundred helpers, declared war on the towering heaps of sand and debris which for centuries had covered Jericho’s ruins.

His work has given us a dear picture of the city as it was, and of the completeness of the calamity which overwhelmed it. The walls have been found-double walls, the outer six feet, and the inner twelve feet thick, and originally about thirty feet high. In various places the walls have fallen outward, quite flat, precisely as the Bible indicated; and the outer wall gives the impression of having been pushed bodily over the brink on which it stood. Critics at one time suggested Joshua was guilty of a pious fraud in that he was supposed to have undermined the walls, and on the seventh day fired the timber which he had placed to hold up the foundations. Even Professor Garstang leaned to this view until he uncovered the wonderful truth.

Though such destruction might normally be considered as a sufficiently fatal blow to any city, the Bible says that Joshua “burnt the city with fire, and all that was therein.” Joshua 6:24. Professor Garstang found ample proof that this was so. The city had been systematically burned-the Israelites had dearly gathered all the combustible material they could to transform the place into one huge bonfire. Even the charred remains of such foodstuffs as dates, grains, onions, and dough, were found in the houses-a fact which would be hard to explain since Israel needed all the food they could get, were it not that we have the Bible record that God ordered them to take absolutely nothing from the place: “The city shall be devoted. . . to Jehovah.” Joshua 6:17, R.V. As Professor Garstang says: “Every room in the palace area tells the same story of walls half fallen, reddened by fire amid layers of white ashes and masses of charcoal, rising through and above the ruins. The store rooms were filled with great pottery vessels ranged in rows and, though now crushed to fragments and their contents burnt, some of them may be seen to have been filled with grain and other foodstuffs, while some were sealed up and still show the dregs of their once fluid contents.” - Quoted in *The Bible Is True*, page 165.

Remains such as the dated scarabs found in the local tombs-the latest of which are seals of the Egyptian Pharaoh and overlord, Amenhatop III-proved that Jericho ceased to exist about 1400 BC. This was the very time at which Bible chronology places Joshua’s invasion!

It is interesting that to the city’s northwest is the great citadel whose walls are still nearly forty feet high. In this place, and the city walls hard by, seem to have suffered little from the upheaval which destroyed the rest of the city. Perhaps Rahab’s house which we know to

have been located on the wall, was built right here and thus was preserved in fulfillment of the promise given her by the spies. For, as The New Commentary remarks: "Had the walls collapsed entirely Rahab and her household could not have escaped."(Page 194. See Joshua 2:12-14; 6:22, 23.)

It can truly be said that whatever solid evidence is unearthed by the archeologists in Bible lands, it invariably proves the sacred Record true. Jericho is a typical example of scores which could be cited as effective dispellers of the notion that much of the Bible is legendary, and not real history.

THE FLOOD

One of the greatest targets of the critics, is the Bible story of the Flood in Genesis, chapter seven. That the world could be so completely overwhelmed by water as the Bible claims, is a dismal thought which many find it hard to accept.

Bible prophecy foresaw exactly how some would think today. "Remember," says Peter, "that, in the last days, men will come who make a mock at everything. For they are willfully blind to the fact that there were, heavens which existed of old, and an earth, the latter arising out of water and extending continuously through water, by the of God. And that, by means of these, the then existing race of men was overwhelmed with water and perished." 2 Peter 3:3-6 (Weymouth). Here is a remarkable portrayal of those who regard the Flood story as merely a legend.

Yet of all the Bible records, this story has left us the most striking--and terrible--evidences of its truth. The stratified rocks with their entombed fossils, and the mighty mountains seemingly torn and rent and heaped up as if by some all-powerful Titan, give mute but stunning testimony that the world was at one time convulsed and overwhelmed by precisely the kind of flood that the Bible describes. "Speak to the earth, and it shall teach thee," is God's invitation and assurance in Job 12:8. When read aright, the earth's rock and fossil record tells of a surpassingly splendid world, compared with which our world today is quite impoverished, but a world that was brought to a sudden and horrible halt.

The mighty dinosaurs whose giant frames can be seen in our larger museums, disappeared suddenly--a fact which completely puzzles geologists. Some rather amusingly try to explain that possibly a certain species developed a mania for eating their own eggs and those of their fellow dinosaurs--though few regard this as a feasible solution. Henry Fairfield Osborn remarks that "this giant dinosaur dynasty "was cut off simultaneously the world over, and Charles Schubert speaks of this as "the most inexplicable of events." The universal Flood of Genesis, chapter seven, supplies the answer.

The gigantic molluscs likewise disappeared suddenly, though their fossil remains prove that they were at one time extremely abundant on land and in the water. The trilobites were suddenly extinguished, and many of the fossil specimens prove that they died instantly as if by suffocation. Fossil fishes, too, show evidence of catastrophic destruction. "Of one group, the Scottish geologist Hugh Miller describes their remains in an area 100 miles across, where the rocks are strewn thick with them. They exhibit all evidences of violent death. The fins are contorted, the body curved about so that tail and head nearly touch. The spines stick out as in a fish that had died in convulsions." (Creation Speaks, pages 48, 49) Scientists cannot explain all this, but Noah's Flood is the complete answer.

It is the same story with the animals. Perhaps the best of many striking examples is that of the mammoths of Siberia where millions met their death in a great cataclysm. At that time this great region with its drowned and buried mammoth was converted from a luxuriant hunting ground for tropical creatures "like the mammoths" into the frigid, relatively lifeless region which it is today. For centuries in Siberia, mammoth tusks have been "mined "and sold. In the north where the ground is always frozen and never thaws, the mammoths are perfectly preserved and their red meat is readily eaten by dogs. "Whole bodies are found in perfect condition, with eyes retaining the glassy stare of sudden death, and identifiable vegetation in the stomachs."(Ibid., page 52) Science is at a loss to explain this. Noah's Flood is the answer.

It is the same story in Alaska where bones of lions, mastodons, elephants, and other animals are excavated by gold-dredging machines. Such things as these, with the evidence of the coal beds and petroleum deposits, prove that God's Word "is true from the beginning," and that the Flood of Noah is no fairy legend but a somber fact.

There is remarkable unity among both Christian and non-Christian races on this subject of the Flood. We would naturally expect to find that a calamity so overwhelming would leave an indelible impression on the minds of the survivors and the races which sprang from them. This is precisely the case. The Eskimos have their record of it, and on this basis refer to the driftwood which has been frozen for ages in the ice as "Nosh's wood." Going to the far Pacific, we find the people of the Marquesas Islands have their own traditional record of the Flood, which is almost identical with that of the Bible. Likewise the Chinese and Japanese, the races of India, and the American Indians of north and south, all have their own Flood traditions which have been handed down from time immemorial.

The ancient Sumerians, Babylonians, and Assyrians likewise had their Flood stories. That of the Babylonians was written on the eleventh of twelve clay tablets which are known as the Gilgamesh Epic, and were discovered in the library of King Ashurbanipal (669-

626 BC). The founder of the Babylonian race was Nimrod, the grandson of Ham who was actually one of the eight whose lives were saved by the Ark. (Genesis 1M.) It is natural therefore that this dreadful calamity should figure prominently in the Babylonian writings.

These traditional accounts differ in detail, but they have one common feature, namely, the Flood was completely overwhelming; only a remnant of men and beasts were saved; and the calamity was a judgment of God on the world. These traditions give further weight to the witness of the rocks and fossils, revealing the Flood of Genesis to be no mere story, but a true record.

Jesus Himself set His seal upon the truth of the story, and warned His followers to avoid the sins which led God to pour out so fearful a judgment. (Matthew 24:37-39; Luke 17:26, 27) The record is passed on to us not by a God who desires to alarm and terrify with His power, but by One who loves us and wants to save us. The great God of love is “longsuffering to us-ward,” and is “not willing that any should perish. but that all should come to repentance.”² Peter 3:9.

No part of the Bible is legendary. It is “true from the beginning,” and contains the only effective remedy for all human ills.

Need We Read the Bible?

Of all correspondence, love letters cause the deepest heart stirrings. Few thrills compare with that of the lover who recognizes his fiancée's handwriting on a letter. How eagerly he devours every word, reading, re-reading, almost memorizing the expressions of affection.

The Bible is God's love letter to us, and He wants us to read it. “Search the Scriptures,” said Jesus. (John 5:39.) - Study to show thyself approved unto God,” Paul exhorted. (2 Timothy 2:15.) And again: “Let the Word of Christ dwell in you.” Colossians 3:16. Time given to the reading of the Bible's sublime messages will help to lift life's burdens and drive away all gloom.

Since the Bible is God's Word, divinely inspired from beginning to end, to neglect it is to deprive ourselves of the most essential things in life. For health and strength we need to eat. Meals must be regular and good. Bad food, or too little food, results in weakness, sickness, and death. For spiritual health-for the development of those virtues of goodness and mercy, hope and courage which all folk love to see-we need to feast on the Word of God.

“Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds out of the mouth of God,” said Jesus. (Matthew 4:4.) Notice that we need “every word.” If we pick and choose, accepting this and rejecting that, an unbalanced diet will result, with consequent loss and disaster. The whole Bible is needed to enable us to live “abundantly.” Our testimony, like David's, will then be: “How sweet are Thy words unto my taste! yea, sweeter than honey to my mouth! “Psalm 119:103.

Our need to read the Bible is all the more apparent when we consider its great purpose. First it was written that we might believe on Jesus Christ as man's only Savior, and as the ultimate Deliverer not alone from the power but from the very presence of everything evil. (John 20:31) It was written to banish gloom, to cheer, and to give us hope. (Romans 15:4.) Its records of saints and sinners, victories and failures, virtues and vices, are given as examples and warnings. (1 Corinthians 10:11) It was written to reveal the eternal certainties which lie before us. (1 Corinthians 2:9; 1 John 5:1-3) It was written to chase the dismal shadows from our hearts, providing in their place the dear, shining light that will enable us to walk safely in a precarious world. (Psalm 119:130.)

Unwise it surely is to neglect this wealthy source of the things we most need! A rich mother died, and bequeathed her many possessions to various relatives. Her son George, seemed to have been almost forgotten. One striking-and to George, disappointing sentence in that mother's will, referred to him: “To George, it ran, “I bequeath my Bible and all it contains.” Disgustedly, George dumped the great Bible on the top of his bookcase, and forgot it. Years later, on opening the neglected Book, he was almost stunned to discover that between its pages had been hidden valuable banknotes. They represented thousands of pounds.

Our Bibles may have no banknotes thus concealed in them, but they do have infinitely greater treasure, the way to happiness and abundant joy, and the promises to those who faithfully follow its precepts of imperishable riches hereafter. If we search our Bibles' pages as for hidden wealth, with open hearts and sincere desire, we will, without fail, be more than satisfied.

Thus will our lives be purified and brought into harmony with God. (Psalm 119:9; John 17:17) Such lives are the world's greatest need. Humanity is languishing neither through lack of silver or gold, nor food or clothes, nor homes or possessions; but for want of that inner goodness, and unselfish regard for others, which only God's Word can give. Never was the need more urgent, that we study and read the Bible for ourselves.

Life is a constant battle against evil. (Ephesians 6:12.) This battle gets fiercer with the passing of time. Personal sins and evil tendencies are our greatest foes, for these can blunt our consciences, mar our inner peace, and destroy our future hopes. These, above all, must be fought and subdued. Hence the apostle Paul describes in detail the Christian's armor. (Ephesians 6:10-17.) He portrays the

armor, the breastplate, the shield, and the helmet, but in this whole list there is but one weapon of attack: "The sword of the Spirit, which is the Word of God." Verse 17.

We have read tragic stories of soldiers who were thrown into battle without adequate arms. Brave and unquenchable though the spirits of such men were, and no matter how unwilling they were to submit to the foe, such men were doomed to defeat.

Thus it must be with the man or woman who fails to take and use "the sword of the Spirit." This sword is "the Word of God" the Bible. If given the chance, it will never fail us. It will provide for us "above all that we ask or think." Ephesians 3:20.

QUESTIONS ABOUT GOD

Who Is God?

HELEN KELLER WAS only nineteen months old when she was stricken with scarlet fever, which left her deaf, blind, and without a sense of smell. Since she was unable either to hear or see, the difficulty of teaching her to read and to speak can be readily appreciated. This great task was undertaken by Miss Anna Sullivan. The story of Helen's education and rise to greatness as a writer and lecturer in spite of her enormous handicaps, is a stirring record indeed. When she was still quite young, her teacher was anxious to let her know about God. How could she do it? She approached the task with dubious feelings, and prayed that somehow Helen might be given understanding. Laboriously the patient instructor tried to direct her blind pupil's thoughts to heaven above, where God dwells. Imagine her surprise-and joy-when Helen smilingly replied, "Oh, I have always believed there was a God."

How did she know? Because of the deep-seated realization that is instinctive in everyone, that there must be a Supreme Being controlling and sustaining the world, and the vast universe. Voltaire once said: "If there were no God, then it would be necessary for us to invent one," because our very reason insists that an all-powerful God is the only answer to all the wonders around us. As David said, it is only "the fool "who bath said in his heart, There is no God." Psalm 14:1.

There are many false gods whom men worship, but there is only one true God. "The Lord He is God; there is none else beside Him." Deuteronomy 4:35. God is the Creator of all things. "In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth." Genesis 1:1.

Out of nothing He made everything. (Hebrews 11:3.) He spoke, and it was so. (Psalm 33:6,9.) Though this may be hard to understand, it is more reasonable than the teaching that out of nothing, no-one made everything, and that the splendors of the heavens, the superb beauties and wonders of nature, and all the hosts of complex creatures on the earth just came by chance, without any intelligent planner or designing mind to produce them. Such a notion is even more unreasonable than would be the foolish suggestion that a delicate watch planned and made its component parts, and assembled itself; or that a picture resulted from paints that sprang spontaneously into being, threw themselves onto the canvas, and arranged themselves artistically. A watch presupposes a skilful watchmaker, and a beautiful picture tells of the artist who made it. Thus it is with the things of nature.

God is the Creator. He says: "I have made the earth, and created man upon it: I, even My hands have stretched out the heavens, and all their host have I commanded." Isaiah 45:12. (See Isaiah 48:13.) When we consider the heavens which God has "stretched out," we are more than ever impressed with His great power. For the vastness of the universe "is suggested by the statement that there are probably like as many stars in the universe as there are grains of sand on all the seashores of the world."(The Stars In Their Courses, page 115, by Sir James Jeans.) Yet with all these stars the sky is not crowded. It is, in fact, emptier than we can imagine. "I have only three wasps alive in the whole of Europe, and the air of Europe will still be more crowded with wasps than space with stars."-Ibid., page 115.

And the vastness of these stars is hard to imagine. Our own sun is only a very small star compared with others. Look up at the constellation of Orion, and in its top left corner you will see Betelgeuse faintly twinkling. Yet this mere speck is actually so vast that it could contain many millions of our suns. If it were as near to this earth as the sun is, its gigantic glowing sphere would fill the whole sky. Yet Betelgeuse is one of multitudes of stars which are its equals.

Other spheres are like the dazzling dwarf, Van Maanen's Star, companion of the brilliant Sirius, which is so tightly packed that one cubic foot of the substance at its center weighs several thousand tons. (Ibid., page 74.)

There is the Great Bear, apparently standing still, yet actually tearing through space at sixty miles a second. Though hurtling forward at incredible speeds, the gigantic stars are precisely controlled by the great God of heaven.

Nearer home is our own sun, belching forth great flames 80,000 miles long, day and night without ceasing. Surely, burning at such a rate, it must some day become exhausted! But no, God who is the source of all energy, declares that the sun's splendor, far from

diminishing, is one day to shine with seven-fold brilliance. (Isaiah 30:26.) Truly as the philosopher Kant, in his Theory of the Heavens declared: "All the capability of human conception sinks exhausted, when we "consider the heavens "which God has made.

Frequently the God of the Bible reminds us of the sublime difference between Himself and other objects of worship. "The gods that have not made the heavens and the earth, even they shall perish from the earth.... He bath made the earth by His power, and bath stretched out the heavens by His discretion." Jeremiah 10:11, 12.

Those who have open hearts will realize with Paul, that "the invisible things of 111m [God] from the creation of the world are dearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even His eternal power and Godhead." Romans 1:20. The structure of our bodies, the song of the birds, the color of the flowers, and the order and beauty which we see even in the inanimate world, all tell of God's creative power and designing mind. Professor Tyndall noted that: "By permitting alum to crystallize in this slow way, we obtain these perfect octahedrons. By allowing carbonate of lime to crystallize, nature produces these beautiful rhomboids; when silica crystallizes, we have formed these hexagonal prisms capped at the end by pyramids; by allowing salt petre to crystallize, we have these prismatic masses; and when carbon crystallizes, we have the diamond."(Fragments of Science, Vol. 1, page 357.) Why should these lifeless substances invariably act in this way? Clearly, the designing mind of God planned it so.

The true God is eternal: "The eternal God is thy refuge." Deuteronomy 33:27. And unlike human beings, He is unchangeable:" I am the Lord, I change not." Malachi 3:6.

The true God is all-powerful. John the revelator describes the song which the redeemed from earth will one day sing: "The Lord God omnipotent reigns." Revelation 19:6.

Nothing is hidden from the knowledge of God. He is acquainted with the deepest secrets of each human heart. "All things are naked and opened unto the eyes of Him with whom we have to do." Hebrews 4:13."His understanding is infinite." Psalm 147:5.

And the prophet Daniel declared He knows what is in the darkness." Daniel 2:22. The true God is also omnipresent-His presence is everywhere. None can flee from Him. "Can any hide himself in secret places that I shall not see him? said the Lord. Do not I fill heaven and earth? said the Lord." Jeremiah 23:24. Wise are we if we remember that "the eyes of the Lord are in every place, beholding the evil and the good." Proverbs 15:1

More wonderful and cheering, however, than the fact of God's power and infinite knowledge, is that which must undoubtedly be the Bible's greatest assurance. God declares Himself to be "our Father," who loves us "with an everlasting love." Jeremiah 31:3; Matthew 6:9. Sinful, weak, unworthy, even repulsive, though we may be, we have a Father above, the great Creator God, Almighty, omnipresent, infinite, and holy, who views each struggling mortal with tender regard and limitless love. ' , Can a woman forget her sucking child, that she should not have compassion on the son of her womb? "He asks; and then continues: -Yea, they may forget, yet will I not forget thee." Isaiah 49:15. Imagine it! God's love exceeds that of a mother's for her new-born infant. It is infinitely deeper, more tender, more constant. Even mother love, the strongest and most tender of human emotions, may fail. But God's love never will.

This great teaching of the Bible is unique. Though the Muslims have ninety-nine names for God, that of "Father "is not one. "It is certain," admits the skeptic Professor G. J. Romans concerning the Bible, "that neither philosophy, science, nor poetry has ever produced results in thought, conduct, or beauty, in any degree to be compared with it. What has all the science or all the philosophy of the world done for the thought of mankind, to be compared with the one doctrine, God is love? "-Thoughts in Religion, page 159.

Is it not comforting to know that the great God, the Creator of heaven and earth, loves you, and as the - heavenly Father, has a personal interest in you? "God is love," and His eyes continually "run to and fro throughout the whole earth, to show Himself strong in the behalf of them whose heart is perfect toward Him."1 John 4:8; 2 Chronicles 16:9.

[Can We Know God?](#)

THE entire Bible was written to show us not only that we can know God - no matter how lowly or degraded we might be-but also to show us the way. Perhaps the supreme example in the Scriptures of one who discovered God is Enoch. He lived before the Flood at a time when "the wickedness of man was great in the earth," when every imagination "in men's minds "was only evil continually." Genesis 6:5. Men's thought and time were completely absorbed with making a living and seeking pleasure. Their greatest sin was forgetfulness of God. (Luke 17:27.)

Doubtless saintly Enoch did all he could to help correct his fellows, and no doubt folk pitifully smiled at the "poor, misguided enthusiast." Uninfluenced by the popular shortcomings, however, Enoch - walked with God: and he was not; for God took him." Genesis 5:24. Paul's commentary on this incident is that "before his translation he had this testimony, that he pleased God." Hebrews 11:5. As the little Sabbath-school pupil is reported to have said: "Enoch used to go for walks with God, and one day they just went on

and on and on. They went so far from Enoch's home that God said at last, 'It's too far for you to return now, Enoch. You had better come home with Me. And that is just what Enoch did. Thus he is still alive today in heaven-one of the two men who have never tasted death-not because of any heroic or wonderful thing he did, but simply because he walked with God and pleased God.

What Enoch did, we can do. All are urged: "Acquaint now thyself with Him, and be at peace." Job 22:21. God has so made us that we cannot have real peace in our hearts, until we thus know Him. Again He says: "Come now, and let us reason together." Isaiah 1:18.

Shackled and starving prisoners used to be tortured by the invitation to eat food and drink water, which was placed just out of their reach by the jailers. Our heavenly Father's invitation is not like that. God does not ask impossibilities. He says: "Taste and see that the Lord is good,"(Psalm 34:8) and in thus inviting us, He places

Himself well within our reach. The apostle Paul says: "Seek the Lord though He is not far from every one of us." Acts 17:27.

We are living in a world where it is becoming increasingly difficult to live a good life. Yet a good life is essential for present health and happiness, and joys hereafter. At such a time we would do well to remember that God is a refuge and fortress (Psalm 46: 1), He is an indestructible rock (Psalm 28:1), and a protective shield (Psalm 84: 11).

We must get to know Him and to prove His protective power, or life will be a failure, and hopes for eternity hereafter must be relinquished. "This is life eternal, that they might know Thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom Thou has sent." John 17:3. But many feel constrained like Job to cry out: "Oh that I knew where I might find Him." Job 23:1

Our best means of finding God is the Bible. If we read it, not with gullible or prejudiced minds, but with a sincere desire to find God, we cannot fail. The Bible tells of Jesus Christ, God's Son, whom we shall consider in later chapters, whose great purpose was to reveal the Father to us. "He that hath seen Me hath seen the Father," He said. (John 14:6-11) The way to God is thus revealed through the prophets and especially through Christ. (Hebrews 1:1.)

Read their assurances. Believe, in spite of the inclination to doubt, that God really is near, that He loves you, that He is willing to help you to find a way through all your problems and sorrows. Millions have done this and proved how wonderfully it works. You may do so, too.

God also speaks through nature. (Romans 1:20.) The grace and beauty of birds, the fragrance of flowers, the flavors and variety of the fruits of the earth, the color and grandeur of all around, tell not only of an almighty God, but of One who loves us. Take time to walk among the trees. As you do so, remember who made them; lift up to Him a thankful heart, and strangely but surely, God will come very near.

It is also most important that we talk with God. There must be communion if we are to acquaint ourselves with Him. In our quiet moments we should speak to Him in prayer, confessing our sins, seeking forgiveness, and asking for strength and grace to work and live as we should. The promise of God is sure that "You shall find Me, when You shall search for Me with all your heart." Jeremiah 29:13.

In all our endeavor to know God, we must remember that two persons cannot walk together "except they be agreed." Amos 3:3. We must agree to go God's way and to forsake sin: for sin separates us from Him. (Isaiah 59:1,2.)

Indeed, one of the sure signs that we have come to a real knowledge of God is that we will obey His will: "Hereby we do know that we know Him, if we keep His commandments."1 John 2:3. The other great proof that we are enjoying His companionship, will be a sympathetic concern for the welfare and happiness of others. "If we love one another, God dwells in us, and His love is perfected in us."1 John 4:12.

"Blessed are they that keep His testimonies, and that seek Him with the whole heart." Psalm 119:2. "God is great, and therefore He will be sought: He is good, and therefore He will be found."
Does God Care?

HENRY WARD BEECHER once said: "God washes the eyes by tears until they can behold the invisible land where tears shall come no more." It has also been said: "Adversity is the trial of principle-without it a man hardly knows whether he is honest or not." Both of these statements are true, and show somewhat of God's benevolent purpose behind the painful, distressing, disappointing experiences to which even His saints are heirs.

Sometimes we are tempted to think that God cannot care much about a world in which such great suffering and sin is permitted. If He does me, then why does He allow it all? Why doesn't He stop it? A more humble feeling may arise in some hearts that God cannot care for such as us because we are so undeserving and unholy.

The answer to the first suggestion is simply that God is giving sin an opportunity to work itself out. Thousands of years ago Satan, the rebel, sought the position of God, and managed to convince a third of the angels in heaven that he was justified in his claims that his way was better than God's way. (Isaiah 14:12-14; Revelation 12:7-9, 4.) For the duration of earth's history God has allowed Satan to demonstrate his claim. The resultant strife and suffering, and in fact all that happens here, provides an object lesson for the rest of the universe, as Paul suggests in 1 Corinthians 4:9. The purpose of this present era of sin is to prove that the way of rebellion against God, far from bringing greater happiness, is disastrous and deadly.

One day soon, God will intervene. And referring to this time He gives the guarantee that "affliction shall not rise up the second time." Nahum 1:9. This guarantee can be given, not because God's creatures will thereafter be

forced to follow Him, but because they will all have had so vivid a realization of the fact that sin inevitably results in misery and death, that they will never again be disloyal to their Maker.

While such is the ultimate purpose of suffering and affliction, there is a present purpose. Sufferings are by no means an evidence that God doesn't care for us, but are permitted rather for our good. Jesus Christ said: "Every branch that bears fruit, He purges it, that it may bring forth more fruit." John 15:2. Here is a picture of the divine gardener performing the painful pruning process. But just as the gardener is never nearer the tree than when he is pruning, so is God never closer to us than during periods of trial. Suffering and setbacks are for our ultimate good. They frequently make us realize the limitations of our moral power, and thus spur us on to seek strength and consolation from God.

Is it not true that the noblest souls are often those who have suffered most? This is because they did not just endure suffering, like joyless Spartans; they rejoiced in adversity. King David admitted: "It is good for me that I have been afflicted; that I might learn Thy statutes." Psalm 119:71.

The righteous job endured loss of home, loss of possessions, loss of family, and loss of health. Yet his sublime reaction to it all was: "The Lord gave, and the Lord bath taken away; blessed be the name of the Lord.... When He bath tried me, I shall come forth as gold." Job 1:21; 23:10.

Suffering sometimes comes because of our own sins and wrong living. Sometimes it results from the sins of others. It may come upon us to keep us from sin. But God is vitally concerned in every case. Speaking of the afflictions of His wayward people, Isaiah says: "In all their affliction He was afflicted." Isaiah 63:9. Suffering, when rightly evaluated, will be seen as a proof-not a disproof-of God's care.

Are we tempted, because of our sins, to doubt His care for us? Read about wayward Israel who had back slidden, committed "whoredom," spread lies, and had been continually guilty of the most provoking behavior. The pathos of God's grief-stricken cry over this unworthy people is extremely moving: "How shall I give thee up, Ephraim? How shall I deliver thee, Israel?" Hosea 11:8. (See also Jeremiah 3:22; Hosea 5:3; 11:12; 12:14.) God's love neither flags nor fails.

Quite often, as in the second commandment, God describes Himself as "a jealous God." Exodus 20:5. In other words, just as a husband rightly desires the whole of his wife's affections, and is grieved if she is inclined to respond to the advances of other lovers, so is God anxious to have first place in our affections. He is so concerned about this, that He is "jealous." In this, does He not greatly honor us? So many have not a care about us, with our personal problems, or about our welfare and affections. Not so God.

His care for us is so great that "He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believes in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life." John 3:16.

Wonderful God: Omnipotent, infinite, and holy-yet how graciously condescending! All who look to Him by faith will, with David, be able to say: "He inclined unto me, and heard my cry. He brought me up also out of an horrible pit, out of the miry day, and set my feet upon a rock, and established my goings." Psalm 40:1,2.

[From Whence Did We Come?](#)

WHETHER we are black, brown, yellow, red, or white, Jew or Gentile, free or bond, rich or poor, of high degree or low, we can all look back to one common ancestor. Our "family trees" all meet in the Garden of Eden. All of us have, as our original forebear, Adam, which was the son of God." Luke 3:38.

As the final act of that remarkable creation week six thousand years ago, God made man in His own image. (Genesis 1:26) “And the Lord God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul.” Genesis 2:7.

Modern science has analyzed the many elements in our bodies, and discovered that they are identical with “the dust” from which we came and to which we return at death. (Ecclesiastes 3:20.) We are composed of oxygen, hydrogen, silicon, magnesium, phosphorus, carbon, and other elements, all of which are allied to the dust. Thus does scientific analysis support the simple Bible statement.

God declares : “I have made the earth, the man and the beast that are upon the ground, by My great power and by My outstretched arm.” Jeremiah 27:5. We do well to remember exactly how God made man, in view of the many conflicting notions on man’s nature which exist today. God took the dust, and formed the body. (Genesis 2:7.) Then He breathed into that lifeless body His breath-which is elsewhere called, the spirit. (See Job 27:3, margin; James 2:26, margin.) The result of this union of the body and the spirit, was “a living soul. “Notice that the very existence of this soul depended on the union of the breath-or spirit-with the body.

Thus, whatever our nationality, we have “all one Father,” for “hath not one God created us?” Malachi 2:10.

It is just as Paul reminded his audience on Mars Hill in Athens: “In Him [God] we live, and move, and have our being; For we are also His offspring.” Acts 17:28.

How sublimely different from the modern theory which traces back our ancestry, not to God, but through long evolutionary ages via sub-humans, beasts, reptiles, fish, and eventually to the primeval cells. Adam, it is claimed by some, came not from the hand of God, but from primitive men of the Old Stone Age. Such theories exist because many today, as in Paul’s day, do “not like to retain God in their knowledge.” Romans 1:28.

Sir Arthur Keith in his Darwinism And its Critics, says: “Snobbery, to be sure, is encouraged in men who feel assured that they have a God-like origin.” In thinking of man’s beginning, Sir Arthur says he prefers to accept the idea of “the humbler and lowlier origin which Darwinism has assigned to him.”

Yet such a conception is far more likely to encourage snobbery, than the truth of the Bible. The ego is more easily inflated by the thought that we have risen from insignificant beginnings to great heights, than by the sobering thought that we began nobly and have, in the main, experienced retrogression ever since.

We can rest assured that we had the noblest possible beginning. “Know You that the Lord He is God: it is He that has made us, and not we ourselves.” Psalm 100:1 Adam, the first of the human race, as he came forth from the hand of the Creator, was of lofty stature, bearing God’s image, and his nature was in harmony with the Father’s Will.

We can all look back to the noblest possible beginning; and it is the blessed assurance of the Gospel that this nobility may be fully restored.

Why Are We Here?

WE are here that we may serve God and our fellow-men. The real purpose of this present life is to fulfil, in a practical, positive way, the “royal law “which says: “Thou shall love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind and thou shall love thy neighbor as thyself.” Matthew 22:37-39; James 2:8.

Many merely live unto themselves. They put self first, self last, and self in between. Invariably they are among the world’s unhappiest people. They live, they work, they save, they spend, they scheme, but “all is vanity “because of their failure to serve life’s great purpose.

We must realize, as has already been mentioned in a previous chapter, that “we are made a spectacle unto the world, and to angels.” 1 Corinthians 4:9. God desires to use us as object lessons, and to prove not only to others here on earth, but also to other intelligences in His universe, that His grace “is sufficient “for us (2 Corinthians 12:9), and that His way-not Satan’s way-is the only way of real happiness. If He can satisfactorily prove this-and for this He depends on us, it will forever rule out the possibility of rebellion against His authority after He has swept the world clean from sin.

We shall serve this purpose if we determine, like Joshua, that “as for me and my house, we will serve the Lord.” Joshua 24:15. It has been pointed out that there are but two ways-die narrow way and the broad, and but two leaders-God and Satan. We cannot choose whether we shall serve these masters or not. Our freedom only permits us to choose which one we shall serve. Hence the words of Jesus He that is not with Me is against Me.” Matthew 12:30. There is no neutrality.

Whatever our calling in life, we must recognize that our primary duty is to “seek first the kingdom of God, and His righteousness.” Matthew 6:33. Our secular pursuits will be helped, not hampered, if we do this. Jesus said: “My meat is to do the will of Him that sent Me, and to finish His work.” John 4:34. If we follow Christ’s example, daily seeking God’s righteousness and the advancement of His cause on earth, our lives will then assume eternal significance.

Many, like the rich fool, think life’s purpose is merely to obtain wealth and possessions. Such should remember that “a man’s life consists not in the abundance of the things which he possessed.” Luke 12:15. (See verses 16-21) Or like the sluggard (Proverbs 24:30-34) they feel that the world owes them a living. They were born without asking to come here, and therefore they feel it is up to the world to see them safely through. They therefore seek all they can get, for as little as they can give. They prefer pleasure to work, which they look upon as an undesirable necessity. They too, miss life’s great purpose, and, of course, life’s real joys.

Still others are like King Nebuchadnezzar who worked hard to build the golden city of Babylon-but to what purpose? (Daniel 4:30.) His mighty work had no enduring value and today it is a vast heap of half-buried rubble. All it did was to bolster up his pride. In this he forgot that life’s real purpose is not to gratify human pride, or to do great things merely to earn the praise of men, but to serve God and to help our fellow-men to discover the light that will show the way to happiness and eternity.

Jesus said: “Whosoever will save his life shall lose it: and whosoever shall lose his life for My sake shall find it. For the Son of man shall come; and then He shall reward every man according to his works.” Matthew 16:25-27. Let our works then, be such as will serve God’s purpose. We pass this way but once, so we should do all we can to assist those around us along life’s difficult road. It has been said that “God has so constituted our nature that we cannot be happy unless we are, or think we are, the means of good to others. We can scarcely conceive of greater wretchedness than must be felt by him who knows he is wholly useless in the world.”

What Is Death?

BEFORE man sinned he was not subject to death. Having access to the tree of life in the Garden of Eden, and living as he was, in complete harmony with the will of God, he could look forward to a life of continual advancement and undiminished vigor. But sin came in, and with sin, came death. “If you eat of the fruit of the forbidden tree,” God warned Adam, “You will surely die.” Genesis 2:17.

Death! The enemy men dread most; the grim reaper whom we vainly try to exclude from our thoughts; the mortifying foe against whom we struggle so hopelessly, and whose frigid touch all the skill of medical science is daily striving to delay. What is this “great leveller “who respects neither saint nor sinner, wealth nor poverty, high nor low?

Death is a sleep, though a much more prolonged sleep than usual. The Psalmist spoke of “the sleep of death.” Psalm 13:3. A visit to the cemetery will show that many memorial tombstones are inscribed: “Asleep,” and “At Rest “-apt descriptions of the dead, in view of the inspired assurance that “there [in the grave) the wicked cease from troubling; and there the weary be at rest.” Job 3:17. This thought of sleep is borne out by our Lord when speaking with His disciples about the death of their friend Lazarus.

Lazarus who lived with his sisters Mary and Martha in the little town of Bethany, had been stricken down with some fatal illness, and now lay dead in the sepulchre. The disciples knew he was ill and were unaware of his death, so when Jesus said. “Our friend Lazarus sleeps,” they felt reassured. After all, sleep is an excellent thing for those who are ill. So they said: “Lord, if he sleep, he shall do well.” But Jesus was actually speaking of his death: “Then said Jesus unto them plainly, Lazarus is dead.” John 11:11-14. Jesus Himself thus confirmed that death is merely asleep.

Just as we are unconscious when we sleep, so it is in death. The Bible says: “For the living know that they shall die but the dead know not anything. Also their love, and their hatred, and their envy, is now perished.” Ecclesiastes 9:5, 6. Some wonder if the dead are mindful in any way of the loved ones they have left behind. The Bible answers: “His sons come to honor, and he knows it not; and they are brought low, but he perceives it not of them.” Job 14:21. It is indeed very merciful that such should be the case. How unbearable would be the thought that the dead could be tortured by the sight of the sufferings and hardships which their living relatives might be enduring. Imagine the heart pangs of a dead mother who sees her living son or daughter take the primrose path to dishonor and degradation. Death, in such a case, would be unendurable torture, not rest. Such, however, is not the case.

It has been beautifully remarked that a Christian graveyard is a cradle where, in the great motion of the globe, Jesus rocks His sleeping children. This lovely conception is in complete harmony with the teaching of the Bible.

But death is an enemy. Its power to grieve and sadden is unparalleled. “The last enemy that shall be destroyed,” says the apostle Paul, “is death.” 1 Corinthians 15:26. There is always a keen sense of loss when we bid our final adieu to some loved one. The poet Byron was correct when he wrote:

What are the worst of woes that wait on age? What stamps the wrinkle deeper on the brow? To see each loved one blotted from life's page and be alone on earth.

But the sleep of death will one day be broken. Job asked a question which many ask today: "If a man die, shall he live again?" Job 14:14. With full assurance, the Bible answers, Yes! "All that are in the graves shall bear His voice [the voice of Jesus Christ], and shall come forth, they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of damnation." John 5:28,29. Contending for his faith before the governor Felix, Paul said: "There shall be a resurrection of the dead, both of the just and of the unjust." Acts 24:15.

When writing to the Christian believers at Corinth and Thessalonica, Paul bade them look forward to the last great day when Christ will come with angel hosts to "give every man according as his work shall be." Revelation 22:12. In that day, said Paul, "the dead shall be raised incorruptible," "in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump." 1 Corinthians 15:52. Even more descriptive is his account in his letter to the Thessalonians: "For the Lord shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the Archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall be first. Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air. And so shall we ever be with the Lord." 1 Thessalonians 4:16, 17.

The fetters of death, forged and applied by Satan, will prove unavailing indeed in that last great resurrection day. And the recovery of His children at that time will present no problem whatever to God, no matter how unrecognizable their present condition may be. What of those hapless victims in Rome's infamous Colosseum who have been fed to the wild beasts? What of the victims of bomb blast or those who have been lost at sea? Though their remains be as completely lost as those of Savonarola and Wyclif, whose ashes were cast into the rivers, yet at the sound of the "trump of God" they will at once respond. Visualizing that wonderful time, John said: "The sea gave up the dead which were in it." Revelation 20:13. And speaking of this time to the incredulous King Agrippa, Paul asked, "Why should it be thought a thing incredible with you, that God should raise the dead?" Acts 26:8. Why indeed! "With God all things are possible." Matthew 19:26.

What a glad time of reunion that will surely be! Which reminds us of the elderly Christian lady whose husband had just died. Before fixing the lid to the coffin, the undertaker asked her: "Would you like to have a last look at your husband?" "Grief stricken but courageous, she replied: "There is no 'last look' for the Christian."

Does the Soul Survive the Tomb?

MANY people believe that though death may claim the body, it cannot touch the soul. It is thought by such that though the body wastes away, reverting again to the dust that the soul enjoys a fuller existence in other spheres. But this is not taught in the Bible. The many positive statements describing death show that it is a condition of unconsciousness. According to the Bible, death is the complete cessation of life.

But what happens to the soul or personality at death? For the time being it ceases to exist. We shall more easily understand this if we liken the body to an electric lamp, and the spirit-or life-giving breath-to the electricity stored in a battery. When the two are brought together, that is, when the electric power is permitted to flow through the electric lamp, we have light. This light is equivalent to the soul.

In the beginning God formed man out of the dust, but it was lifeless until He applied the life-giving breath-or spirit. This union of body and spirit resulted in the formation of the soul. (Genesis 2:7) The soul is not something apart from the body and spirit. It depends entirely on the union of the body and spirit for its existence; just as the light of an electric lamp can only exist as long as there is union between the electric power and the lamp. When the union is broken, the light goes out. The light does not go off somewhere when the bulb is broken, or when the switch is off. Though the bulb and battery may remain as separate things, the light simply ceases to exist. It is this way with the soul. At death the disintegrating body remains, and so also does the spirit or breath, because it "returns to God who gave it" (Ecclesiastes 12:7): but the soul, like the light, has temporarily "gone out."

We should, of course, remember that just as the light is vastly more important than either bulb or electric power upon which it depends for its existence, so likewise is the soul of man more important than the breath and the body.

It is commonly believed that the soul is immortal, but the Scriptures state that only God has immortality. Paul speaks of the divine "King of kings, and Lord of lords, who only hath immortality." 1 Timothy 6:16. Man is mortal as mentioned in Job 4:17.

Shall mortal man be more just than God? Job, of course, means the whole man body, soul, and spirit. If indeed, any part of man were especially denoted here, it would be the soul, for it is with the soul, not the material body, that we associate such intangible qualities as justice.

Our Lord provides a further reminder that our souls are not immortal in His warning: Fear not them which kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul: but rather fear Him [God] which is able to destroy both soul and body in hell.” Matthew 10:28. The soul then, is destructible. It is therefore not immortal.

Few facts are more universally misunderstood than this. Belief that the soul lives on after death, has been cherished by men of all ages and all religious beliefs, even including the heathen. We once attended a lecture in a crowded Protestant chapel to hear the minister speak on the theme:” There is No Death.” We thought of the very first denial of truth that was ever spoken. It was a lie, uttered by Satan, in the garden of Eden, and it led to the fall of man. It reads thus: “You shall not surely die.” Genesis 3:4. This untruth has been perpetuated ever since.

“All men’s souls are immortal,” claimed the ancient Greek philosopher Socrates, “but the souls of the righteous are both immortal and divine.” And some centuries later, the Roman emperor and philosopher, Marcus Aurelius Antoninus, expressed the thought: “What springs from earth dissolves to earth again, and heaven-born things fly to their native seat.” He shared with Socrates the belief that while the body “dissolves to earth again “after death, the “heaven-born” soul wings its flight to other realms, there to continue its immortal existence in another form.

Varying conceptions of the soul’s destiny at death exist among Christians today. Some believe it goes to purgatory, there to be purified and fitted for admittance to heaven. Others, that the soul wings its way immediately to the bliss of heaven, or descends to writhe eternally in hell.

While many theories on the soul’s destiny prevail, there is a basic agreement among them. Almost all assume that the soul is immortal. Many find comfort in believing this. Some, like the famous Cicero, prefer not to hear of any other solution to the problem of death. Said Cicero: “If I am mistaken in believing that the souls of men are immortal, I am content to be mistaken, nor do I wish to have wrested from me while I live the mistake that cheers me.”

The greatest danger in believing this, is the tendency to feel that survival is automatic, and that acceptance of Jesus Christ, who alone is “the resurrection, and the life “does not really matter. (John 11:25)

The Bible, in describing the dead, says: “In death there is no remembrance of Thee.” Psalm 6:5. “The dead praise not the Lord.” Psalm 115:17. “His breath goes forth, he returns to his earth; in that very day his thoughts perish.” Psalm 146:4. Now supposing it were true that the soul were immortal and indestructible, such statements as these would be wrong. For one of the most popular ideas is that the souls of the saints go immediately to heaven, where they would naturally devote much time to praising God. But it may be said that such statements refer only to the body. If such, however, were the case, why should the Bible, which rightly emphasizes the supreme importance of the soul, confine its many descriptions of the condition of death, to that of the body? We can rest assured that if the soul really did wing its way to worlds afar, a benevolent God would tell us so in His Word.

For comfort, however, we are admonished to look forward to the general resurrection day, when the Lord will intervene in the affairs of this world. (1 Thessalonians 4:15-18.) In that wonderful day, all God’s saints will be rewarded together. Then, they unconsciously sleep the sleep of death. In his sermon on the day of Pentecost, Peter said: “For David is not ascended into the heavens.” Acts 2:34. And Paul, writing of the saints through the ages, said that “these all, having obtained a good report through faith, received not the fulfillment of the promise: God having provided some better thing for us, that they without us should not be made perfect.” Hebrews 11:39,40.

David still rests in the tomb (Acts 2:29,34), and the saints of an ages still rest with just a few exceptions. They are awaiting the final day of God when, as a great united family, they, with those who are alive in that day, shall be given perfect bodies which shall never die. (1 Corinthians 15:51-58.) The spirit, or breath, which at death returned “to God who gave it “-for His safe keeping as it were-will be reunited with the resurrected bodies. Once more will they become “living souls,” and thereafter for all eternity will they have the privilege of enjoying heavenly “pleasures forevermore.” Psalm 16:1 l.

All may receive immortality, for as Paul says, it is one of the great provisions of the Gospel of Jesus Christ “who hath brought life and immortality to light through the Gospel. 2 Timothy 1:10. It provides for all a most desirable goal for which we are diligently to prepare. God will graciously confer it on “them who by patient continuance in well doing seek for glory and immortality!” Romans 2:7.

[Are We Fated?](#)

No one is fated in the sense that “what must come, will come.” We can, for instance, take wise precautions against sickness; or we can run undue risks and by our carelessness become seriously W. Illness in such a case is determined not by “fate,” but by our own course of action. As motorists we can drive carefully and safely, or we can recklessly violate every rule of the road and meet with disaster.

Disaster results not from “fate,” but from our own carelessness. During the war it was frequently said: “If a bomb has my name on it, I can’t avoid it.” Such, however, was not necessarily the case. All the bombs in the world couldn’t hurt anyone who took sufficiently effective precautionary measures.

Yet “fatalism” is surprisingly widespread. The Roman philosopher and emperor, Marcus Aurelius, believed: “Whatever may happen to thee, it was prepared for thee from all eternity.” And Goethe taught that “man supposes he directs his actions, when his existence is irretrievably under the control of destiny.”

The Bible, however, shows that we have it largely in our power to determine our lot in life, and that it is solely our choice which determines our eternal destiny just as surely as in the minor things of everyday life, effect

follows cause, so it is in the major issues of eternity. God decides destiny only in the sense that a careless, sinful, ungodly life, will certainly terminate in eternal death; and that a life of faith and trust in Him will just as surely result in the abundant life of eternity. God decides the outcome in each case, but we decide which course we shall pursue.

This great fact was brought before ancient Israel by the Lord through His servant Moses. “I call heaven and earth to record this day against you,” He said, “that I have set before you life and death, blessing and cursing: therefore choose life, that both thou and thy seed may live.” Deuteronomy 30:19. Here are brought before us the two ways-good and evil, success and failure, joy and misery, the narrow way and the broad, eternal bliss and everlasting darkness-ways that are constantly held out to us in the Scriptures.

Such an invitation to choose is itself a proof that we have the power to choose. Those who choose the Lord, and decide to follow His Word, will know the joy of fellowship with Him such as Enoch had, and will at last be saved in His eternal kingdom. But those who select the other way need be under no misapprehension. A benevolent God who loves us all has given us ample warning in the Bible. “Have I any pleasure at all that the wicked should die? Said the Lord God: and not that he should return from his ways and live?” Ezekiel 18:23.

The great Father of love has nothing but grief and sorrow for the one who spurns the divine invitation and warning, and who suffers the inevitable gloom and misery and ultimate death as a result. God prefers that all careless ones should turn to Him, and invites them to do so-a clear proof that they have it in their own power to make the change. “Cast away from you all your transgressions, whereby you have transgressed; and make you a new heart and a new spirit: for why will you die?” Ezekiel 18:31.

Let us take heart as we realize that our destiny is in our own hands. “If the wicked restore the pledge, give again that he hath robbed, walk in the statutes of life, without committing iniquity; he shall surely live, he shall not die.” Ezekiel 33:15.

But you ask, what about such circumstances as birth, situation in life, and international events, over which we have no control? One answers: “Fate has not woven its meshes about any human being so firmly that he need remain helpless and in uncertainty. Opposing circumstances should create a firm determination to overcome them. The breaking down of one barrier will give greater ability and courage to go forward. Press with determination in the right direction, and circumstances will be your helpers, not your hindrances.” – Christ’s Object Lessons, page 332.

As we thus press forward in faith, remember we are accompanied by God. His promise is: “When thou passes through the waters, I will be with thee; and through the rivers, they shall not overflow thee: when thou walks through the fire, thou shall not be burned, neither shall the flame kindle upon thee.” Isaiah 43:2. To every man there opens a high way, and a low; And every man decides The way his soul shall go. John Oxenham.

[Are We Responsible?](#)

SOME may ask: “Does not the Bible teach that we are either born to be saved or born to be lost? Does it not teach that God Himself has thus predestinated us, and that therefore we are not really responsible, and can do very little about our eternal destiny?”

Ibis is not so. The assurance of the Scriptures is that “whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved.” Romans 10:13. No one is excluded. None are by nature so depraved that they cannot become sons and daughters of God. And, in fact, John tells us that Christ “was the true Light, which lights every man that comes into the world.” John 1:9. You see, every man has the capacity to become a son of God, he has an instinctive dislike for evil, and an admiration and desire for nobility and goodness. This is the God-given “Light.” It can, of course, be extinguished in time. But to begin with, we all have it, even though we may have been born of ungodly parents or perhaps in a pagan environment. The very presence of this “light” “provides us all with wonderful possibilities-and therefore makes us all responsible for our final destiny.

If, on the other hand, it were true that God had predestinated some people to be damned, then all the Gospel invitations would be mere mockery. This great Gospel message which is to go to all the world (Matthew 24:14; 28: 19) would be unnecessary for the ones who

are born to be saved, and useless for the ones who are born to be lost. It would be as if a father locked his child securely in a dark room and then called to him to come out and enjoy himself, knowing full well that the child could never respond. All of us would shrink from such inhumanity. Yet “shall mortal man be more just than God?” Job 4:17.

But you say, does not the Bible teach that we are as day in the hands of God, and that He is the potter who moulds us according to His will?

Jeremiah gives a wonderful picture of God’s intimate contact with men and women by likening Him to a potter. He says: “When I went down to the potter’s house, and, behold, he wrought a work on the wheels. And the vessel that he made of day was marred in the hand of the potter: so he made it again another vessel, as seemed good to the potter to make it. Then the word of the Lord came unto me, saying, O house of Israel, cannot I do with you as this potter? said the Lord. Behold, as the day is in the potter’s hand, so are You in Mine hand.” Jeremiah 18:3-6.

Here is a picture of God at work. He sets out to make a beautiful vessel, but in this case there is a fault in the clay. It is gritty, insufficiently responsive. The work “was marred,” so He tries again, this time another shape, or perhaps planning to make a vessel suitable for more menial purposes. The fault is not the potter’s that his plans have to be changed. The fault is with the clay. So it is with us. We are the clay, and though by our lack of co-operation, God’s plan for us may be repeatedly marred, He still tries to make something of us.

Paul mentions two kinds of vessels in Romans 9:15-22; namely, honorable ones, and dishonorable. The lesson of this apparently difficult passage is that God overrules and applies His molding influence to every life, no matter who the person is or how bad he is. No one can escape God. In every case He is going to determine the shape of the vessel, whether it is honorable or dishonorable. Before each life-or “lump” of clay (verse 21)-are these two possibilities. It is for us to decide which type we shall be, but when we have decided, God does the molding and decides the shape.

For instance, we do not all have the same talents or gifts-they differ “according to the grace that is given to us.” Romans 12:6. Some are prophets, some apostles, some teachers, some are healers, etc. (Corinthians 12:28-30.) Basically, it is God who decides our characteristics and gifts. It is God who in this way decides our shape.

Thus it is, even should we decide against God, following a life of willful disobedience to His commandments, and thereby choose to be dishonorable vessels. God will nevertheless decide the shape. “Whom He will,” says Paul, “He hardens.” Romans 9:18. It is the ones who have already decided against God-who, in other words, have committed the unpardonable sin-who are sometimes hardened in this way. On the other hand, it may serve God’s purpose better for such dishonorable vessels to be softened so that they are tolerant to His cause. But with such vessels, whether hardened or softened, they are lost; for theirs was the vital decision against conformity to the will of God.

Paul mentions the interesting case of Pharaoh whom God hardened. (Exodus 4:21.) God was not unjust, neither was He predestinating Pharaoh to be lost, for Pharaoh himself had made the decision against God. He had reached the point-by his own volition -where he could not repent, and was therefore already a lost man. He had chosen, in other words, to be a dishonorable vessel. Whether hardened or softened would make no difference to his eternal destiny. In this case, therefore, the Master Potter “hardened” him, making him unsympathetic to Moses’ demands for freedom, and thus making possible those mighty manifestations of God’s power in the plagues, and the parting of the waters of the Red Sea. (Exodus 7-11; 14:21.) Paul says as much: “Even for this same purpose have I raised thee up, that I might show My power in thee, and that My name might be declared throughout all the earth.” Romans 9:17. Had Pharaoh been softened, the world at that time would never have had such a unique opportunity of witnessing God’s power.

Thus we see that we are wholly responsible for the way God deals with us. We ourselves decide the type of vessel we will be. God, however, decides the shape. He has a perfect right to do this, of course, for “shall the thing formed say to Him that formed it, Why has Thou made me thus?” Romans 9:20.

Now, Paul does speak of predestination in Ephesians 1:5, where we read that God has “predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the good pleasure of His will.” God’s plan then, is for us all to be His sons and daughters. (1 Timothy 2:4.) Whether we yield to His predestinating influence or not, is entirely for us to decide. We are responsible for this. But, as Paul points out, God will exercise a molding influence in our lives generally, whatever our decision may be.

The most satisfying answer to the question: Has God predestinated anyone to be lost? Is Peter’s assurance that “the Lord is not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance.” 2 Peter 3:9.

Wonderful, benevolent God of love! He will do all He can to see us safely through to the eternal kingdom, if we choose to follow Him.

QUESTIONS ABOUT OUR CONDUCT

Is There Any Sure Rule of Right?

SINCE God is anxious for our well-being and happiness not only here but also hereafter, we know there

must be a rule of right—a perfect standard of living ordained by Him, which we must measure up to. Where there is no such rule which declares: “This is right,” and: “That is wrong,” there can be nothing but confusion.

There was a time in ancient Israel when “there was no king,” and “every man did that which was right in his own eyes.” Judges 17:6. It was a time of national weakness and confusion. Freedom for all to follow their own inclinations led not to happiness, but to oppression and bloodshed.

Supposing for instance there were no rule of right for road-users, and, of course, no means of enforcing any rules; suppose everyone could do precisely as he pleased; what chaos there would be! If motorists had freedom to drive on the right side of the road, as well as on the left—or even on the pavement should they fancy doing so. And if there were no limit to speed, no requirements regarding parking, or noise, or engine condition, or brake efficiency; and added to this, if there were no rules whatever for pedestrians who could jay-walk or obstruct the traffic to their hearts’ content, what confusion and carnage there would be. Quite dearly, rules are good and very necessary.

The world recognizes the need for rules, and has many of them. But when we consider human laws in their moral aspect, we often find no unanimity as to what is right and what is wrong. For instance, in different countries, different standards of conduct are approved. In England we condemn abortion and polygamy, but there are places where these practices are justified. Our laws rightly condemn infanticide, but others regard it as perfectly proper in certain circumstances. Among various negro tribes for example, twin babies are looked upon as a curse, not a blessing, and are therefore left in the bush to die. The moral conscience of such people is differently regulated from ours. Anciently in Ammon lived the worshippers of the god, Moloch, who regarded it as a most praiseworthy thing to burn their infants as sacrifices to their god. Moses warned Israel against this hideous form of worship. (Leviticus 20:1-5.)

We think of others today, who believe that to deceive, or to tell falsehoods, is perfectly in order and, indeed, commendable, if it is for the benefit of their particular religion or political party. Some believe that “the end justifies the means,” no matter how underhanded those means may seem to us.

These different rules, these varying standards by which to measure life and conduct, obviously cannot all be right. Yet in each case there are those who really believe they are right. Light is shed on this fact by the wise man who says: “The way of a fool is right in his own eyes,” and adds that “there is a way that seems right.... but the end thereof are the ways of death.” Proverbs 12 15; 14:12.

This is rather startling, isn’t it? Here is portrayed the man who realizes the need for a rule of right, who seeks to discover such a rule, who at last sincerely thinks he has found it, and who conscientiously follows it—yet it proves, after all, to be the way of death! How important therefore that we definitely discover what is right. It is a life and death matter. Clearly not all the ways which men uphold are right. There can be only one right way, in spite of a modern contention that “there is not, and cannot be absolute finality “in the matter.

We are reminded of the little boy who proudly announced that he was six feet high. His mother smiled: “But you’re only a little boy, son. You’re no more than three feet high.”

“But I am, Mother,” was the emphatic reply. “You see, I’ve made a little ruler all my own, and by this ruler I am six feet tall.”

Men may measure up well to their private conceptions of right, but if their conceptions are wrong—like the little boy’s home-made ruler—their conduct is bound to be imperfect.

Fortunately, we have a rule of right, which is not a mere codifying of primitive taboos, nor a product of convention or tradition, neither is it an outcome of men’s opinions. It was planned and prepared and dearly written by God Himself—the most comprehensive, concise, and perfect rule that was ever given. It is contained in the Ten Commandments, known also as the Moral Law, or the Law of God:

1. “Thou shall have no other gods before Me.”(God must come first in the life.)
2. “Thou shall not make unto thee any graven image, or any likeness of any thing that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth. Thou shall not bow down thyself to them, nor serve them. For I the Lord thy God am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth generation of them that hate Me. And showing mercy unto thousands of them that love Me, and keep My commandments.”(The making of idols and images, and the worshipping of them, or even the bowing down before them, is forbidden.)

3. “Thou shall not take the name of the Lord thy God in vain; for the Lord will not hold him guiltless that takes His name in vain.”(By this law, profanity and swearing are condemned. So also is the inconsistency of those who name the name of God as their Savior and Guide, but whose lives do not truly represent Him. They honor “Me with their lips, but their heart is far from Me.” Mark 7:6. This commandment condemns those who do not practice what they preach.)
4. “Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy. Six days shall thou labor, and do all thy work: but the seventh day is the Sabbath of the Lord thy God. In it thou shall not do any work, thou, nor thy son, nor thy daughter, thy manservant, nor thy maidservant, nor thy cattle, nor thy stranger that is within thy gates. For in six days the Lord made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that in them is, and rested the seventh day: wherefore the Lord blessed the Sabbath day, and hallowed it.”(This is a positive command, showing the importance of resting from all unnecessary work each Sabbath day as it comes to us week by week, and using it as a day of worship.)
5. “Honor thy father and thy mother that thy days may be long upon the land which the Lord thy God gives thee.”(This reminds us that we must respect and honor our earthly parents or guardians.)
- 6.”Thou shall not kill.”(This law forbids murder.)
7. “Thou shall not commit adultery.”
8. “Thou shall not steal.”
9. “Thou shall not bear false witness against thy neighbor.”(This law condemns lying, misrepresentation, dishonesty, fraud, and cheating.)
10. “Thou shall not covet thy neighbor’s house, thou shall not covet thy neighbor’s wife, nor his manservant, nor his maidservant, nor his ox, nor his ass, nor anything that is thy neighbor’s.”(Among other things, this law and the eighth commandment, emphasize the right of ownership which every man has, and the need for that right to be respected.)

These commandments are found in Exodus 20:3-17. Christ sums them up in Mark 12:30-33, and shows that they are the practical application of the two basic rules: “Thou shall love the Lord thy God with all thy heart.” and:” Thou shall love thy neighbor as thyself.” By keeping the first four, we show our love to God, while through the last six we show our love to our fellows.

Every precept of this law appeals to our sense of reason and justice, just as it did to the apostle Paul who said: “The law is holy, and the commandment holy, just, and good.” Romans 7:12. What a delightful place the world would be if all men honored the law of God. There would be no broken homes, no lying, no stealing, no dishonesty, no violence, no bloodshed, no hatred of either God or man. The specter of fear and insecurity would speedily vanish from this old world. Men would recognize themselves as all one family in Christ Jesus, and manifest brotherly love in all their dealings. “Love,” says Paul, “is the fulfilling of the law.” Romans 13:10. The world’s greatest problems would evaporate overnight. It would be a veritable heaven on earth.

The keeping of God’s rule of right will not only make the present life happier. But, best of all, it will definitely fit us for a place in the coming kingdom of eternal peace. The very last blessing in the Bible is pronounced on those who love God’s law. It says: “* Blessed are they that do His commandments, that they may have right to the tree of life, and may enter in through the gates into the city.” Revelation 22:14.

[What Is Sin?](#)

MARTIN LUTHER described sin as “a departure from God,” while Thomas Carlyle regarded the “deadliest sin “as “the consciousness of no sin.” Howell declared that “little sins are the pioneers of hell,” while Hitchcock defined sin as “the abuse of human appetites, of human passions, of human faculties, in themselves all innocent.”

The Bible’s dearest definition of sin was penned by the apostle John in his first letter. Sin, he wrote, is the transgression of the law. 1 John 3:4. The law here referred to is not a man-made law, for human laws may not always be good. Their requirements quite often conflict with the will of God as revealed in His Word. John is here writing of the Ten Commandments, and he dearly states that sin is the breaking of these commandments. Paul states it this way: “By the law is the knowledge of sin.” Romans 3:20.

If there were no law of God, there would be no sin; for, as Paul remarks: “Where no law is, there is no transgression.” Romans 4:15. For instance, today we can let our lights shine freely through our windows on a dark night. But had we done this very same thing during the war, we would have been faced with heavy penalties. We would have been regarded as a public menace, and rightly so, in view of the nightly danger of aerial bombardment. Why is it that we can do today, what was wrong a few years ago? Simply because

then there was a “black-out “law which forbade the showing of lights; but today that law is abolished. There is now no “black-out “law, therefore there is no such thing as a “black-out “offence; for we cannot break a law which does not exist.

But God’s law is not temporary in its nature like the “black-out “laws. It is equally necessary for us today, as it was for the men and women in Old Testament days. Sin still exists because God’s law still exists. Were it not for the law of God, men’s conceptions of sin would be very hazy and conflicting. Therefore the law sets before us the perfect standard of living which God requires, and by which He will judge us all at the last.

One of the reasons why Jesus came to this earth was not to destroy that perfect law of God, but to magnify it. (Isaiah 42:21; Matthew 5:17.) For instance, His comment on the seventh commandment which says: “Thou shall not commit adultery,” was: “I say unto you, That whosoever looks on a woman to lust after her hath committed adultery with her already in his heart.” Matthew 5:27, 28. Here we see that even the unholy thought comes under the scope of God’s law.

We have a further magnification of the law in 1 John 3:15 Whosoever hates his brother is a murderer: and You know that no murderer bath eternal life abiding in him.” John is here considering the sixth commandment which says: “Thou shall not kill.” We rightly condemn the fatal blow, the fatal shot, or the fatal dose of poison. But the hateful, spiteful spirit toward others, is equally condemned by God’s law. We all know how mortifying and discouraging hateful words can be. Vitality is sapped. Life, for a time at least, loses its zest and glow. Hatred brings clouds of discouragement and gloom which are just as surely killers-though of a long-term variety-as the fatal blow of the murderer.

While most of us abstain from lawless acts, none save those who trust in Christ can be wholly free from sinful thoughts. Thus, another of Christ’s purposes in coming to this world was that He might cast down “imagination, and every high thing that exalts itself... bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ.” 2 Corinthians 10:5.

Sin separates us from God; it robs us of all that is best in life; it mars our health and disturbs our peace of mind; it breaks up homes by raising ugly barriers of estrangement and hate where trust and love should prevail. And “sin, when it is finished,” said James, “brings forth death.” James 1:15.

Does Sin Really Matter?

JUST as the smallest break in an electric wire prevents the power from flowing through and thus disables the entire system, so sin breaks the connection between us and God. We wonder sometimes why God does not show Himself more definitely in our experience. Sin is usually the answer. “The Lord’s hand is not shortened, that it cannot save; neither His ear heavy, that it cannot hear: but your iniquities have separated between you and your God, and your sins have hid His face from you.” Isaiah 59:1, 2.

If sin can thus separate us from our greatest Friend; if it can deprive us of the help and power which alone can see us safely through to the eternal kingdom, then sin is something that really matters.

We must resist the common tendency to excuse or condone sin, and must certainly shun the danger of explaining it away as is so often done by certain psychiatric experts. Some, for instance, look upon crime as the result of mal adjustments for which the criminal is not really to be blamed-no more than we would blame a sick person for having a rash on his skin. And many are the theorists who look upon sin as the remnants of those animal instincts which are our natural heritage. We must not, they say, develop a “guilt complex “because of our “animal impulses.” We are, they say, no more responsible for them than we are for the color of our eyes, though of course, we should strive to quell them.

This reminds us of Malachi’s complaint: “You have wearied the Lord with your words. Yet you say, Wherein have we wearied Him? When you say, Every one that does evil is good in the sight of the Lord, and He delights in them.” Malachi 2:17. Such was the conception and practice in Malachi’s days. They were virtually sticking innocent labels on bottles containing poison. And the idea still prevails today, that God is so loving that He will exclude no one from the eternal joys.

God will, of course, gladly receive the greatest sinner if he is willing to forsake his sins and turn from them. But if sin is knowingly retained in the life, and the sinner excuses himself by explaining away his weaknesses rather than frankly facing the fact that these sins must somehow be overcome, then the joy of real communion with God can never be known. For sin, as Isaiah says, separates us from the Father’s face.

Hence the wise man’s reminder, “He that sins against Me [God] wrongs his own soul.” Proverbs 8:36. Sin deprives us of Heaven’s boundless treasures. Sin may be pleasurable, but its joys are ephemeral and leave an aftermath of dissatisfaction, unhappiness, and guilt. The grosser sins are especially blighting to our lives, even setting their imprint on our features.

Sin does matter, because it makes our prayers of no avail. "If I regard iniquity in my heart," said the Psalmist, "the Lord will not bear me." Psalm 66:18. Yet effective prayer is absolutely essential if we desire to win through this life to the joys of Christ's coming kingdom.

Sin does matter, because if it is not repented of and forgiven, it results in eternal death. "The wages of sin," says Paul, "is death." Romans 6:23.

Sin does matter, because others suffer by it, either directly or indirectly. Sinful indulgence makes us less able to pray, less inclined to go to church, less interested in the Word of God, and thus less able to wield an influence for good on those with whom we daily associate. By our sins, they are robbed of something good which we could otherwise give. Sin confuses and weakens the mind, and lowers our spirits so that we carry with us an atmosphere of gloom rather than one of encouragement and exhilaration.

Sin does matter, because of its effect on our children. They inherit our sinful tendencies. The sins of the fathers shall be visited "upon the children unto the third and fourth generation of them that hate Me," says God. (Exodus 20:5.) This law of heredity may at first sight seem unjust, but, among other reasons, it was divinely ordained as a deterrent from sin, and an inducement to live more nobly. Illustrating this law are the results of certain investigations carried out in America. "American investigators have traced the records of the descendants of a woman alive in 1740, whose manner of life was thoroughly disreputable. In 1935 these descendants totaled 2,820. In 1915 of the 1,250 then alive, 464 were prostitutes, 118 criminals, 170 mendicants, 129 workhouse inmates, and 181 habitual drunkards. Many of the rest were weak-minded in varying degrees." (Everybody's Book of Facts, page 280.) In like manner the law of heredity works favorably if by the grace of God, we avoid sinful indulgences and walk in the light of His Word. For instance, "Jonathan Edwards, the famous speaker and writer, in 1900 had 1,394 descendants. Of the men, 13 were university presidents, 65 university professors, 60 doctors, 60 authors of some standing, 130 lawyers, 75 army officers, 100 clergymen, and 80 who had held high official positions of various kinds." -Ibid., page 280.

For our children's sake, for the sake of our partners, our parents, our associates, our casual contacts, and of our own selves, we should remember that sin does matter. Never forgetting Christ's merciful warning that in the judgment even our "idle" words will be met again, and all our acts and thoughts will have to be accounted for. (Matthew 12:36; Ecclesiastes 12:14)

"There is no sin we can be tempted to commit, but we shall find a greater satisfaction in resisting than in committing." Someone has truly said: "To recognize that sin really matters, is the beginning of salvation."

What Sin Cannot Be Forgiven?

THERE is no sin which God will refuse to forgive, but there is a sin which He is unable to forgive. David called it "the great transgression." Psalm 19:13. John described it as the "sin ... unto death." 1 John 5:16.

Surely, you will say, such a sin, whatever it is, is unlikely to be committed by ordinary people. We may have our lapses and shortcomings, but as long as we maintain a reasonable standard of decency and respectability, there can be no danger-or even possibility of our being guilty of any deadly sin. Such sins, we think, must be looked for among the criminal class, certainly not among self-respecting citizens.

But right here there is danger. It is true that "the great transgression" is evident among the criminal classes, and undoubtedly they are in more danger than others. But it is also true that law-abiding citizens are in danger as well.

But is not the unpardonable sin something really terrible such as murder? Must it not be one of those listed against the ones who are excluded from heaven at the last? Here is the list: "But the fearful, and unbelieving, and the abominable, and murderers, and whose mongers, and sorcerers, and idolaters, and all liars, shall have their part in the lake which burns with fire and brimstone: which is the second death." Revelation 21:8. And later in the same chapter the writer solemnly assures us: "There shall in no wise enter into it [heaven] any thing that defiles, neither whatsoever works abomination, or makes a lie: but they which are written in the Lamb's book of life." Verse 27.

Terrible, however, as are some of these sins they can all be forgiven by God as is demonstrated over and over again.

Indeed, throughout the Bible are stories of men and women who were great sinners, yet who came to the Lord and were forgiven. Here is Jacob, a man whose very name is symbolic of all that is mean and underhanded. He took advantage of his father's blindness by masquerading as Esau his brother so that he might receive the precious birthright. His father Isaac, had doubts as to his son's identity. "Are you sure you are Esau?" he asked. "Positive, Father. Feel these arms of mine; they are hairy, not soft and smooth like Jacob's. I am your first-born son, Esau!" Repeatedly Jacob thus lied to his aged father, and at last succeeded in receiving the blessing. (Genesis

27:1-29) The fact that it was God's desire that he should have this blessing is beside the point. Jacob had grievously sinned. But because of his repentance, God forgave him. (Genesis 28:12-15.)

King David was guilty of great crimes. He committed murder and adultery. But, like Jacob, he repented and was forgiven. He testifies: "The Lord heard my cry. He brought me up also out of an horrible pit, out of the miry clay." Psalm 40:1, 2.

And because that crucified thief repented at the last, the Lord freely forgave him. Though his life had been a dismal record of lawlessness, Jesus sweetened his last few dying moments with the promise of heaven. (Luke 23:39-43.)

The prodigal son in Jesus' famous parable spurned his father and his home, selfishly squandered his father's wealth, and was eventually reduced to the lowly level of a swineherd. He symbolizes those who are unthankful, unholy, pleasure-seeking, backsliding, and worldly. His father symbolizes God. The moving story tells of that broken boy's sorrow, and decision to return home. This he did, looking more like a tramp than a young nobleman. "But when he was yet a great way off, his father saw him, and had compassion, and ran, and fell on his neck, and kissed him." There was a joyful willingness to forgive and to reinstate. (Luke 15:12-32.)

If then, such great sins as these can be blotted out by God, what sin can there be which God is unable to deal with? The answer lies in the fact that while forgiveness depends mainly on God, it also depends upon ourselves. In a sense, the initial step is ours. If we so sin, that we are unable to take this step, then God cannot do His part. He cannot pardon us.

It is required in all who seek forgiveness, first that they recognize and admit their sin, then that they sincerely repent, and finally determine by God's grace to cease from doing that which is wrong. (See Acts 2:38, 17:30; 2 Corinthians 7:10; Ephesians 4:3 1.) Now if we are incapable of experiencing godly sorrow and repentance, if we are like certain Gentiles of Paul's day who were "past feeling" (Ephesians 4:19), then God cannot act and we can never know the joy of forgiveness. When we lose the sense of sin, when our consciences are seared by willful continuance in wrong-doing, then we are unable to fulfil our part in this most necessary experience of forgiveness-and consequently God is unable to fulfil His part. This is the unpardonable sin.

In all the cases of forgiveness we have mentioned, the sinners were genuinely sorry that they had done wrong. They repented, they turned from their evil ways; and because they repented and were sorry, God forgave. In the case, however, of King Saul, because he persisted in his acts of disobedience to God's commandments, he was eventually cut off from pardoning grace. (1 Samuel 28:6) That tragic king, realizing his lost condition, took his own life on the battlefield of Gilboa. God could not forgive him, because he was past repentance. He had continued so long in his disobedient course, that he was incapable of godly sorrow. His conscience was seared. His sin-which was in reality, a succession of willful sins-was therefore unpardonable.

Familiarity with sin breeds indifference. It becomes less and less sinful to us. Like the Englishman whose first visit to a Spanish bull fight nauseated him with horror, but who, continuing to attend, finally reached the place where he sensed a kind of exhilarating fascination in the sight of gore and disembowelled animals. Or like the alarm clock which most effectively rouses us at first, but with whose bell we at last become so familiar that we sleep right through it. Thus it is also in the spiritual life. Our consciences may at first cry out loudly and vehemently against sin. The more we steel ourselves against it, however, the less clear becomes its warning and pleading voice. If sin is willfully continued long enough, the voice fades away at last into complete silence. The Holy Spirit is thus "grieved away. The heart is irreparably hardened. The conscience is scared. (1 Timothy 4:2.) The sinner is "past feeling." He is unable to repent, and thus God is unable-though not unwilling-to forgive. Thus is committed the unpardonable sin. (See Mark 3:28, 29.)

Have we committed it? Not if we have any desire whatever for forgiveness and fellowship with God, nor if we are in any way sincerely concerned about the matter. Our very concern shows that God's loving, convicting Spirit is still working with us.

How can we avoid committing the unpardonable sin? By heeding His voice when He says to us: "This is the way, walk You in it." Isaiah 30:21. By ceasing from sin, and by doing what we know to be right. (James 4:17) By following the light of truth as God reveals it to us.

Let us follow God's merciful entreaty: "Ask for the old paths, where is the good way, and walk therein, and You shall find rest for your souls." Jeremiah 6:16. And let us seek, like Paul, "to have always a conscience void of offence toward God, and toward men." Acts 24:16.

"Who is a God like unto Thee, that pardons iniquity, and passes by the transgression of the remnant of His heritage? He retains not His anger forever, because He delights in mercy." Micah 7: 18.

QUESTIONS ABOUT JESUS CHRIST

Who Was Jesus Christ?

NO ONE in all history has been more loved, or more hated, than Jesus Christ. No person has been subjected to so overwhelming a barrage of criticism, vilification, misrepresentation, and mockery, as the Son who was born to Mary in that lowly stable of Bethlehem two thousand years ago. Yet no person has ever influenced humanity for good to an extent that even begins to compare with that of Jesus. His life and teachings have done infinitely more to elevate and ennoble the world than anything or anyone else. Nobility of character, kindness, truth, mercy, forgiveness, benevolence, works of mercy for the sick and infirm, sympathy for the weak and downcast—all these virtues and scores of others spring from the dynamic power and inspiration of Christ's teachings and example. The world today is sick indeed; it is at a low spiritual ebb. But what degree of genuine goodness and sanity still remains, is due to Jesus of Nazareth.

Was Jesus merely a man, or was He divine? Was He a deity, or merely a superior Craftsman in the art of living? Was His claim that He and His Father [God] were one (John 10:30) to be interpreted theologically or, as some suggest, was it to be understood as having merely a psychological significance?

The Bible leaves no doubt in the mind of the open-hearted reader. The angel who told Mary the thrilling news that she was to bear a Son, assured both Joseph and his betrothed that "that which is conceived in her is of the Holy Ghost," and that "that Holy thing which shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God." Matthew 1:20; Luke 1:35. According to this divine messenger, Jesus was the Son of God.

John recognized the divine nature of Jesus, declaring Him to be "the Word "which was with God ""in the beginning," and which actually "was God." He declares that all things were made by Him; and without Him was not anything made that was made." John 1:1-3. Lest we should doubt the identity of "the Word "who created all things, John makes the startling announcement that "the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth." John 1:14. Paul too, boldly claims that Jesus, the Son of God, was one with the Father in the work of creation. Says the apostle: "By Him [Jesus] were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth.... all things were created by Him and for Him." Colossians 1:16. In this letter to the Hebrews, the writer says that God hath spoken unto us by His Son [Jesus], whom He hath appointed Heir of all things, by whom also He made the worlds." Hebrews 1:1,2.

Such indeed was the expectation of such prophets as Micah who, seven hundred years before, prophesied the very place where the Messiah should be born. "But thou, Bethlehem Ephrathah, though thou be little among the thousands of Judah, yet out of thee shall He come forth unto Me that is to be Ruler in Israel; whose goings forth have been from of old, from everlasting." Micah 5:2. About the same time Isaiah was given a prophetic vision of Christ's birth, declaring the names of the Child who should be born to be:

"Wonderful, Counselor, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace." Isaiah 9:2.

What tremendous claims! Jesus Christ was God. He was one with the Father, He was the Creator. He was eternal. But in Bethlehem He assumed our nature, identifying himself with man as the first great step in God's marvelous plan whereby we may be reconciled to Him.

Jesus frequently received worship. When John fell at Gabriel's feet to worship him, John was forthwith rebuked: "I am thy fellow servant," said the angel, "worship God." Revelation 22:9. (See Revelation 19:10.) When Cornelius, the Roman centurion, fell down to worship Peter, the apostle speedily corrected him: "Stand up; "he said, "I myself also am a man." Acts 10:26. Both Peter and Gabriel realized that God has the sole and exclusive right to be worshipped. So also did Jesus, for when Satan tempted Him in the wilderness by promising to deliver to Him the dominion of this world if only He would fall down and worship him, Jesus said: "Thou Shall worship the Lord thy God, and Him only shall thou serve."

Only God then on Christ's own showing, can be truly worshipped." Yet Jesus received worship on several occasions: from the leper (Matthew 8:2), from the Gadarene (Mark -5:6), from the disciples (Matthew 28:9), and from many others. He did not rebuke those who bowed in worship before Him. Yet Peter did. So also did the angel Gabriel.

Only God can forgive sins. Yet Jesus forgave the sins of the palsied invalid who was let down through the roof for Him to heal, "Son thy sins be forgiven thee," were the Savior's comforting words. (Mark 2:5) "But this is blasphemy," murmured the fault-finding scribes; "Who can forgive sins but God only? "Mark 2:7. Recognizing the truth of this latter claim, and desiring thereby to give them further proof that He was God manifest in the flesh, Jesus said to them: "Whether is it easier to say to the sick of the palsy, thy sins be forgiven thee; or to say, Arise, and take up thy bed and walk?" The answer was obvious. Clearly it is easier to tell a physical wreck that he is forgiven, than to heal him instantaneously. So Jesus continued : "That You may know that the Son of man hath power on

earth, to forgive sins, (He said to the sick of the disease) I say unto you, arise take up your bed and walk. And immediately he arose.” Mark 2:9-12. In this further practical way, Jesus sought to prove His divinity.

These claims are either true or false. Either Jesus is divine, or He is the greatest deceiver of all time. Yet the very suggestion that One so outstandingly noble, so sinless (John 8:46), so amazingly powerful for good, should be a hypocrite, is against all reason. We let Professor Henry Rogers speak:

“The world refuses to believe in the possibility of a hypocrite, whose writings inculcate, and whose conduct exemplifies, the highest order of moral excellence; it refuses to believe in a benevolent, self-denying, modest, magnanimous liar, in whom falsehood speaks with the very tongue, looks through the very eyes, and personates the very gestures and tones of truth; it refuses to believe that a man with no earthly motive for it, and every earthly motive against it, spent thirty years in cheating men into truth and virtue, which He Himself had utterly renounced.”

Jesus came as “the Desire of all nations” (Haggai 2:7), at a time when spirituality was at its lowest ebb, when many honest souls were weary of their own unsatisfied inspirations, and sensed the world’s supreme need of the true God to manifest Himself in human form. It was felt by such philosophers as Plato that since men could not climb to God, God must somehow stoop to men. He said: “We will wait for one, either God or a God inspired man, to teach us our religious duties and to take away the darkness from our eyes.”(The Unrealized Logic of Religion, page 35.) Jesus Christ was the fulfillment of this need. He came to showmen the way back to God.

Even skeptics acknowledge the divine nature of Christ. Rousseau asks: “Can the Person whose history the gospels relate be Himself a man? What sweetness, what purity in His manners! What affecting goodness in His instructions! What sublimity in His maxims! What profound wisdom in His discourses! What presence of mind, what ingenuity of justice in His replies! Yes, if the life and death of Socrates are those of a philosopher, the life and death of Jesus Christ are those of a God.”-Emile IV, Vol. 2, page 110.

Recognizing His divine nature he further asks: “Whence could Jesus have derived among His countrymen this elevated and pure morality of which He alone has given the precept and example? From the bosom of the most furious bigotry, the most exalted wisdom is heard, and the simplicity of the most heroic virtues honors the vilest of the people.”-Ibid., page 110.

William Lecky, the Irish historian, also testified: “The simple record of three short years of His [Christ’s] active life, has done more to regenerate and soften mankind than all the dissertations of philosophers, and the exhortations of moralists.” Morality, Vol. 2, page 88.

Jesus, the Creator, one with the Father and the Holy Spirit, God manifest in human flesh, humbled Himself because He loves us. He came to seek and to save that which was lost.” Luke 19:10. And to each lost soul in the world today, He extends the loving invitation: “Come unto Me, all You that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.” Matthew 11:28.

[Why Did Jesus Need to Die](#)

JESUS died to save us from eternal death. In no other way could sinful men hope for life hereafter. God saw our desperate condition due to sin. He saw that - all have sinned and come short of the glory of God.” Romans 3:23. He was well acquainted with the tragic truth that “there is none righteous, no, not one.” Romans 3:10. Some may indeed be less sinful than others; but to a more or less extent, all have broken God’s holy law. None are innocent before Him. This is truly an alarming condition, because “the wages of sin is death.” Romans 6:23. Death! Eternal separation from God and from the joys of heaven!

As a murderer is condemned and suffers the death penalty, so would it be with every single human being in the final judgment-unless some way of escape could be devised. For sin means death.

This solemn fact is taught throughout the Bible. Sins, open or secret, large or small, hideous or “respectable,” can only be expiated by death. “Without shedding of blood is no remission,” says Paul. (Hebrews 9:22.) Even though by diligent striving a person may think himself able to say, “I have made my heart clean, I am pure from my sin “(Proverbs 20:9), he does not thereby wash away the guilt of his earlier sins, nor does he escape the death penalty which will ultimately be incurred by them. Man’s is a sorry plight indeed.

But the Son of God, in agreement with God the Father, came to man’s rescue in the person of Jesus Christ. (1 Corinthians 15:22) Said the angel to Mary before His birth as a human being: - Thou shall call His name JESUS: for He shall save His people from their sins.” Matthew 1:21. Jesus offered Himself as man’s substitute. He himself was prepared to pay the death penalty for our sins. This He did when His precious blood was shed upon the cross of Calvary where He was crucified. (Matthew 27:29-54)

“God commends His love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ, died for us.” Romans 5:8. Those who believe on Jesus as their Savior will not be condemned to death in the judgment. His death will be accepted in place of theirs.

Thus Paul says: There is therefore now no condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus.” Romans 8:1. How wonderful that unworthy mortals can thus be reconciled to God. “You are made nigh,” says Paul, “by the blood of Christ.” Ephesians 2:13. None who believe on Jesus need fear the great judgment day of God. Their past sins may be great and many, but the death penalty has already been paid. “For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believes in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life.” John 3:16.

This reassuring idea of a substitute was not a new one. When the Israelite slaves in Egypt killed the Passover lambs, and sprinkled the blood on their door posts, thus escaping the fearful death sentence which fell upon the Egyptians, they understood somewhat of God’s merciful provision of a Savior who would redeem from the power of death. (Exodus 12:1-23) Christ is called “our Passover” who was “sacrificed for us.” 1 Corinthians 5:7. If we pray for His blood to be sprinkled in our hearts (1 Peter 1:2), as the blood of the Passover lamb was sprinkled upon the door posts of ancient Israel, the final death sentence will “pass over” us. We shall be free, and life eternal will be ours.

The sublime lesson of a substitute was daily impressed on Israel of old every time they brought a lamb for a sin offering. The sinner was required to select an unblemished lamb or a kid, bring it to the door of the tabernacle, confess his sins upon its head, and then slay the innocent creature with his own hand by means of a knife which was provided. The priest stood by with a dish to catch some of the blood as it flowed from the dying victim, and this he sprinkled upon the horns of the altar. Here the blood congealed and hardened, thus providing a grim record that sins had been committed, but that blood had been shed for their remission. He who faithfully obeyed these instructions had the assurance that his sins “shall be forgiven him.” (Leviticus 4:27-35.) Thus was brought home to those ardent people the hideous and cruel nature of sin. They were daily reminded that “without the shedding of blood is no remission” for sins. Sin meant death.

Those innocent creatures of Old Testament times were types of Christ. For Jesus is our sacrificial Lamb. When He came to John the Baptist for baptism, at the beginning of His ministry, John pointed to Him and said: “Behold the Lamb of God, which takes away the sin of the world.” John 1:29. “He is brought as a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before her shearer is dumb, so He opens not His mouth.” “But He was wounded for our transgressions, He was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon Him; and with His stripes we are healed.” Isaiah 53:7, 5.

As we gaze upon the lowly Jesus of Nazareth we are looking upon God, the Creator, and Sustainer of all things, yet upon the loving Savior who willingly assumed responsibility for all the sins of those who trust Him, and who paid the supreme penalty for them by dying on Calvary. None but God could thus die in our stead, for only God has merits which are large enough to cover the needs of the millions of those who shall be saved. Had Jesus merely been a perfect man, His death would have sufficed to save only one imperfect man. But praise God, there is abundant salvation for all—provided they accept the Savior Jesus Christ, “for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved.” Acts 4:12.

Just think of the price God paid for us. So unwilling was He to lose us, that He paid the greatest price He could: “You were not redeemed [bought] with corruptible things, as silver and gold; but with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish.” 1 Peter 1:18,19.

In the days of slavery a strong, skilful negro was standing dejectedly on the auction block, as men bid higher and higher for him. Finally, the last bid was accepted—the highest price that had been paid for any slave that day. As the negro was led away to his new master, he wondered how he would be received. Would he be sworn at? Would he be lashed with the whip?

“Sam, I’ve bought you,” said the master.

“Yes, master,” replied Samuel

“Sam,” said the master—and his voice became very tender, “I bought you so that you can go free.”

Sam could scarcely believe his ears, but looking into his master’s kindly eyes and smiling face, he knew that the man was sincere.

“What will you do with your freedom, Sam?”

“O master, “was the immediate reply from the negro who dropped to his knees, I’ll be your slave forever.” Christ has paid the price for our freedom. He desires us to accept the salvation He freely offers, by believing on Him, and following Him.

It is the supreme glory of the Gospel message, however, that Christ rose from the tomb. (John 20.) The fetters of death could not hold Him. (Acts 2:24) A little later He ascended to heaven (Acts 1:9), where He has ever since been ministering on behalf of men and women. He is today, a living Savior.

“For if, when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of His Son, much more, being reconciled, we shall be saved by His life.” Romans 5:10.

What shall we do then, with Jesus, which is called Christ?

What Is Jesus Doing Now?

THE great purpose of Jesus is to bring about a complete restoration of that happy relationship between God and man which Adam and Eve enjoyed before they sinned. His is a service of love whereby He is seeking "to save that which was lost" (Luke 19:10), and is the "means" "devised by the great God of heaven whereby "His banished be not expelled from Him." 2 Samuel 14:14. This means led to the incarnation of Jesus Christ, to His tragic death on Calvary, to His resurrection and ascension to heaven.

To bring before His ancient people an object lesson of His benevolent plan for lost mankind, God gave Moses the command: "Let them make Me a sanctuary; that I may dwell among them. According to all that I show thee after the pattern of the tabernacle, and the pattern of all the instruments thereof, even so shall you make it." Exodus 25:8,9. Truly a remarkable picture of a loving God seeking the friendship and salvation of the unworthy offenders.

This sanctuary with its contents, services, sacrifices, and priesthood, was a shadow or type of "the true tabernacle" "in heaven," "which the Lord pitched, and not man." Hebrews 8:2. It was ordained "to serve unto the example and shadow of heavenly things, as Moses was admonished of God when he was about to make the tabernacle: for, See, said He, that thou make all things according to the pattern showed to thee in the mount." Verse 5. For us, therefore, to appreciate the full meaning and purpose of the heavenly sanctuary of which Christ is the High Priest and Minister, it is necessary to study the details and purpose of that earthly structure which brought such blessing and consolation to ancient Israel.

John was given a vision of the great sanctuary in heaven. He actually saw some of its furnishings. "The temple of God was opened in heaven," he says, "and there was seen in His temple the ark of His testament." Revelation 11:19. The sacred ark in the earthly sanctuary was the sole furnishing for the Most Holy place, and was the repository of the Ten Commandments of the sacred law. It was made of wood overlaid with pure gold, and was surmounted by two beautiful golden cherubim. Between them was the mercy seat, also of solid gold, whereon the shekinah glory of God was manifest. (Exodus 25:10-22.) This visible presence of God was there to assure His penitent people of mercy, forgiveness, and acceptance. At the same time, the Law beneath the mercy seat, and within the ark, demanded that justice be done, which meant death for the transgressor. Thus it was here at the ark—a symbol of God's throne—that "mercy and truth" "were met together!" Psalm 85:10. The mercy was revealed which saved and accepted the penitent sinners, while at the same time the just claims of the law were respected and upheld. Justice was maintained by the system of animal substitutes which was devised, and which provided the people with constant and sole reminders of the coming "Lamb of God," even Jesus Christ. Those who faithfully adhered to God's plan gained forgiveness.

Thus God provides salvation, freeing us from the death penalty for sin, not by abolishing His law, but by providing a Savior or Substitute whose voluntary death is accepted on behalf of all those who have faith in Him.

So when Jesus ascended to heaven after His resurrection, He was ordained our High Priest; and He bases His plea for our forgiveness, not on the blood of sheep and bulg and goats, but on His own shed blood. (Hebrews 9:12-14) Throughout the centuries He has interceded on man's behalf, thus making forgiveness and grace freely available for contrite sinners. His limitless power and laying service are free for all who desire it. "Wherefore He is able also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by Him, seeing He ever lives to make intercession for them." Hebrews 7:25. Paul assured the Romans that Christ who died and rose again "is even at the right hand of God" "and" "also makes intercession for us." Romans 8:34. And John penned the cheering assurance that "if any man sin, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ, the righteous!" 1 John 2:1.

Now once every year the earthly sanctuary was cleansed, on the annual "Day of Atonement." Throughout the year the sins of the penitent were provisionally forgiven when the blood of the animal sacrifices was placed on

the altar. But on the Day of Atonement or judgment, the high priest entered the Most Holy Place of the sanctuary, there to sprinkle the blood of the Lord's goat before the ark of the covenant where God's visible glory was manifest. The sins of the penitent were blotted out on that day. The provisional pardons of the previous year were confirmed and ratified, and the sanctuary was thus cleansed of its sin record. But the impenitent were cut off from the people. (Leviticus 23:29; see also Leviticus 16)

This annual Day of Atonement, according to the Jewish Encyclopedia, was known also as the Day of Judgment—the day for the sanctuary to be cleansed. On that day it was "sealed who shall live and who are to die, etc."—Vol. II, page 286.

As with the earthly, so with the heavenly sanctuary. The annual day of judgment was really a symbol of the closing work of judgment in the sanctuary in heaven. The antitypical day of atonement—or the period for the "cleansing" "of the heavenly sanctuary"—is thus the most solemn time toward the close of this world's history. During this time all are to be judged, all records investigated, all rewards

fixed, whether for life or death, and at the close of this time the decree is to go forth. "He that is unjust, let him be unjust still: and he which is filthy, let him be filthy still. And he that is righteous, let him be righteous still. And he that is holy, let him be holy still." Revelation 22:11.

Daniel saw that final judgment scene in heaven. His raptured eyes saw the "Ancient of days (God) - upon His throne, "a fiery stream issued and came forth from before Him: thousand thousands ministered unto Him, and ten thousand times ten thousand stood before Him: the judgment was set, and the books were opened." Daniel 7:9, 10.

This final work of judgment-which must of necessity precede the Second Coming of Christ to this world, since He will bring His reward with Him when He comes (Revelation 22:12) is the work in which Christ Jesus is taking part now. This solemn, closing phase of His priestly work in heaven, is now taking place. In fact, this judgment period can be accurately placed by means of one of the most outstanding time-prophecies of the Bible. This time of the dead, that they should be judged," described also as a time when "the nations were angry"(Revelation 11:18), is actually now in progress, and according to the prophetic declaration of Daniel, began just over a hundred years ago.

The prophet Daniel, somewhat staggered by the striking symbols which portrayed for his-though chiefly for our-benefit an outline of world history, was told: 'Unto two thousand and three hundred days; then shall the sanctuary be cleansed.' Daniel 8:14. Now since God in His prophetic messages frequently uses a day as a symbol for a literal year (e.g. Ezekiel 4:6), this declaration to Daniel actually meant that a period of 2,300 years would elapse before the final judgment should begin, when "the sanctuary" would be "cleansed." The angel who explained to Daniel the various symbols he had seen, was unable until some time later to explain the details of this time-period of 2,300 years, for the prophet says: "I Daniel fainted.... and I was astonished at the vision, but none understood it." Daniel 8:27. The next chapter records Daniel's prayer for understanding, and his humble confession of sins to the Lord. (Daniel 9:3-19.) In response to his prayer, the angel Gabriel was sent to give further details of the time-prophecy, with the vital explanation as to its beginning. "O Daniel," he said, "I am now come forth to give thee skill and understanding. Therefore understand the matter and consider the vision." Daniel 9:22, 23. The only part of the previous vision which Daniel did not understand was the 2,300 year time-period. We therefore conclude that the angel's revelation was to provide further details of this particular period.

Said the angel: "Seventy weeks are determined [cut off] upon thy people [the Jews] and upon thy holy city [Jerusalem], to finish the transgression, and to make an end of sins, and to make reconciliation for iniquity, and to bring in everlasting righteousness, and to seal up the vision and prophecy, and to anoint the most Holy, Daniel 9:24.

Here is a period of 70 weeks or 490 literal years (a day for a year - "seventy weeks of years." Moffatt) during which several things should happen. Among these things would be the provision of a means of "reconciliation for iniquity" - plainly, a reference to Jesus Christ and His sacrifice for sins on Calvary. (See Romans 5:10.) Also the period would suffice for the Jews' transgression, as a nation, to be finished. In other words, their transgression would assume such proportions, due to their rejection of Christ, that as a people they would cease to be God's chosen race.

The next verse gives the vital clue as to the actual beginning of the time-period. Know therefore and understand, that from the going forth of the commandment to restore and to build Jerusalem unto the Messiah the Prince shall be seven weeks, and threescore and two weeks." Daniel 9:25. In Daniel's day Jerusalem was in utter ruin, having been completely wrecked by King Nebuchadnezzar. (2 Kings 25:1-10.) The effective decree for this desolated city to be rebuilt and restored, went forth in the year 457 BC. It was granted to them by the Persian Emperor, Artaxerxes Longimanus.

The rebuilding was to take 49 years ("seven weeks"). This difficult and dangerous work, hampered as it was by such determined ill-wishers as Sanballat and Tobiah (Nehemiah 4), was thus to begin in 457 BC and end in 408 BC. History confirms that this work of restoration was accomplished in the appointed time, in the fifteenth year of Darius Nothus.

A further 434 years ("three score and two weeks") was to extend "unto the Messiah the Prince" (Jesus Christ). Four hundred and thirty-four years beyond 408 BC bring us to the year AD 27, the very year when Jesus was baptized and when His earthly ministry began. It was in AD 27 that "it came to pass, that Jesus also being baptized, and praying, the heaven was opened, and the Holy Spirit descended in a bodily shape like a dove upon Him, and a voice came from heaven, which said, Thou art My beloved Son; in Thee I am well pleased." Luke 3:21, 22. How wonderfully accurate was the prophetic word!

Applying the starting date of 457 BC to the 490 year period allotted to the Jews, we are brought to the year AD 34. This was the very year when, after having seven years of Christian ministry in Jerusalem, the Jews waged such determined and bitter persecution against those early torchbearers of truth that they were "scattered abroad." Acts 8:1. This was the year that Stephen, the first Christian martyr, sealed his testimony with his blood. (Acts 7:57-60) This then, was the year when the Jews, because of their inflexible determination to reject Christ, ceased to be God's chosen race. The believing Gentiles, together with a faithful Jewish remnant, were henceforth to constitute God's chosen race. (1 Peter 2:9.)

From AD 27 to AD 34 is a period of just seven years, or one prophetic week. Thus the prophecy declares: "He [the Messiah] shall confirm the covenant with many for one week: and in the midst of the week He shall cause the sacrifice and the oblation to cease." Daniel 9:27. The "covenant" was confirmed for precisely the time specified. For throughout this brief seven year period the Gospel was preached in Jerusalem, and many were converted. But, influenced by their rulers, the mass of the populace was fiercely opposed.

"In the midst of the week" the temple sacrifice was to be fulfilled by the Messiah. This is precisely what happened. "The midst of the week" would be just three and a half years from AD 27, bringing us to AD 31. This was the fateful year of Christ's crucifixion on Calvary. He, the "lamb of God," died on the cross. From thenceforth the sacrificial system of the Jewish temple was no longer necessary, for the great event to which that system pointed and of which it was a symbol, was now an accomplished fact. Type had met antitype in AD 31. Hence, our dying Savior, "when He had cried again with a loud voice, yielded up the ghost. And, behold, the veil of the temple was rent in twain from the top to the bottom." Matthew 27:50,51. This miraculous tearing of the sacred veil which divided the Most Holy place from the Holy place of the temple, signified that the whole ceremonial system of animal sacrifices was no longer efficacious and should now cease.

Thus do the facts and dates of history confirm the details of this remarkable prophecy, and by them, the year-day principle of prophetic interpretation is likewise ratified.

But what is of great importance to us is the longer period of this striking revelation. Inasmuch as the above details were given by Gabriel to explain the time-period section of Daniel's previous vision-which he had failed to understand-then clearly the 2,300-year period must begin at the same time as the 490-year period. Both begin in 457 BC. Two thousand three hundred years from this date carry us away down through the centuries to the year AD 1844. This is the one date of the entire prophecy which history cannot confirm, for the obvious reason that the date marked an event not on earth but in heaven. The year 1844 marked the beginning of the final investigative judgment, when the heavenly sanctuary shall "be cleansed." Daniel 8:14.

Christ, our High Priest, is now engaged in this work of judgment. The records of all, from Adam onward to our day, are being considered. Soon, that work will be finished, human probation will cease, the irrevocable decree of Revelation 22:11 will go forth, Christ will lay aside His priestly robes and assume His rightful rôle of King of kings, and He will return in glory to this earth, bringing His reward with Him. (Revelation 22:12)

But you ask, why should such a judgment be necessary? Does not God know, without the help of record books, the details and merits of our lives? Yes, He does. But the hosts of unfallen beings do not share in His extensive knowledge. They, as Daniel saw (Daniel 7:9, 10), are present at this investigation. God desires to settle conclusively in their minds that all who shall be admitted to heaven are genuinely worthy. This period of investigative judgment then, provides them with the opportunity of having their doubts removed, and of confirming the decrees of the Almighty. This is as it should be, since the angels naturally want to be sure that in the future there shall be no risk of such calamitous rebellions against God as that of Lucifer's. (Isaiah 14:12-14.)

Truly then, we are living in solemn times. It is the time of judgment. How will it be when eventually our records are opened for the scrutiny of that heavenly throng? Will the decree for us be life or death? Eternal bliss and access to the entire universe, or everlasting oblivion? It is for us to choose. Surely the very gloom of these perplexing days should provide an added incentive for us to "believe on the Lord Jesus Christ that the divine verdict upon us may be: Covered by the blood of Jesus.

"He has sounded forth the trumpet that shall never call retreat, He is sifting out the hearts of men before His judgment seat: Oh, be swift my soul to answer Him, be jubilant my feet. Our God is marching on."

[How Can We Be Saved?](#)

WE are saved by believing on Jesus Christ as our personal Savior. (Acts 16:31) If, in a spirit of repentance, we humbly acknowledge and confess our sins, recognizing that of our selves we can do absolutely nothing to remove or lessen our guilt, and believe sincerely that Jesus Christ will forgive, then will be fulfilled the promise. "If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness." 1 John 1:9. Believing this, is what we mean by "faith." If we have such faith, we are "justified" before God (Romans 5:1), and being thus justified we will have peace of mind and peace of heart. A reassuring sense that all is well between us and God will bring deep joy and satisfaction into the life. The power of sin will be broken, and the certain joys of the hereafter will be a daily source of inspiration. Saved thus from the guilt and power of sin, our inner peace will be perfected as we daily anticipate the wonderful prospect of at last being saved from the very presence of sin.

[How Can We Be Perfect?](#)

ALL who are justified, are given the robe of Christ's righteousness. This robe, which is neither felt nor seen by us, is given to all who recognize their need of it, who ask God for it, and who then believe that they have it. This covering robe makes us perfect in God's sight. By being thus clothed, we are fulfilling the admonition; "Put You on the Lord Jesus Christ." Romans 13:14.

Until we receive this robe, we are still arrayed-like the Pharisees, -4n our own righteousness which is as filthy rags (Isaiah 64:6), and are therefore quite unacceptable before God. He need for this robe was emphasized by Jesus in His well-known parable of the man who sought the joys of the wedding feast without previously putting on the appropriate garment. The garment he wore was doubtless the very best he could produce, but it was not good enough. The only garment which could fit him for the feast was the one provided freely by the bridegroom. That unhappy man was therefore forcibly evicted from the nuptial feast. (Matthew 22:11-13.)

The wedding celebrations of this parable represent "the marriage supper of the Lamb"(Revelation 19 : 9) which all the saints will enjoy when welcomed to the heavenly home at last. If we would be there, we must be clothed with the garment provided by God. Any garment of our own would be quite inadequate, for "there is none righteous, no, not one." Romans 3:10. Immediately we put on this garment, however, we are accounted worthy, righteous, and perfect, by God. We are justified.

This wonderful experience is possible through Jesus. As Paul remarked: "For He [God the Father] hath made Him [Jesus Christ His Son] to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him." 2 Corinthians 5:21. The transaction is brought to view in a most appearing way in Zechariah 3:1-5.

Thus we see that the command of Christ: "Be You therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect," is a possibility, and indeed an accomplished fact for all who have faith. (Matthew 5:48.)

This acceptance of Christ's righteousness is the work of a moment. But having this robe, there thenceforth begins a work of personal purification, known as "sanctification." 1 Thessalonians 4:3. justification means that Christ's righteousness is imputed to us; sanctification means that His righteousness is being imparted to us. Sanctification is the work of a lifetime. For though robed with salvation we still have weaknesses to overcome. Daily the Lord will give us strength sufficient for our struggles with sin, and if we stumble and fall at any time, "we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous." 1 John 2:1.

A person who is truly justified, who is arrayed with the raiment of salvation (Isaiah 61:10), will be Obedient to God's commandments. "If You love Me, keep My commandments," said Jesus (John 14:15); and again: "If You keep My commandments, You shall abide in My love." John 15:10. A person may claim to love and know God, but is knowingly and willingly disobedient, his profession is empty. (1 John 2:4.)

For every one of us this glorious transaction is by far the most important issue we face. Without accepting God's provision, we are heading for eternal loss. But with His-merciful provision, we can confidently anticipate the joys of eternal life.

QUESTIONS ABOUT THE HOLY SPIRIT

Who Is the Holy Spirit?

THE Holy Spirit or Holy Ghost-is the third Person of the Godhead. The Spirit's activities are vital in the work of salvation. Without the Spirit, there could be no sense of sin, no repentance, no means of resisting evil, no reconciliation with God, no hope of eternal life. Sin against the Spirit, as Jesus said, is the unpardonable sin. (Mark 3:29) Therefore we should know what the Bible says about the Spirit.

The Holy Spirit, like Jesus Christ, is one with God the Father. He united with the Father and the Son in the work of creation (Genesis 1:1, 2), and He is associated likewise in the work of redemption. When giving His Gospel commission Jesus bade His disciples to "teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost." Matthew 28:19.

Speaking of the human body, Paul. says that it is "the temple of God." And he later declares it to be "the temple of the Holy Ghost." 1 Corinthians 3:16; 6:19. When those early Christians, Ananias and his wife Sapphira, defrauded the church treasury, the apostle Peter rebuked them thus: "Why hath Satan filled your heart to lie to the Holy Ghost? Thou has not lied unto men, but unto God." Acts 5:3, 4. Such texts as these, show clearly the personality and deity of the Holy Spirit. (See also 2 Corinthians 13:14; 1 Peter 1:2; 1 John 5:7) The Holy Spirit is not an emanation from God. He is not an intangible, unfeeling, unintelligent, impersonal influence. The Holy Spirit is a manifestation of God, possessing all the personal attributes of the Father and the Son. But His precise nature is, to us, an undisclosed mystery.

We can hear and see and feel the effects of the wind, but cannot actually see it. So it is with the Spirit. His effect is felt and seen in individual lives. This proves conclusively, that though we are unable to understand the Spirit's form, yet the Spirit is very real. (John 3:8.)

Do We Need the Holy Spirit?

THE Bible says: "If any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of His." Romans 8:9. This means that those without the Spirit are separate from God, and such separation means that all hope of future bliss and happiness must be relinquished. It even means that our present welfare is in greater jeopardy than it otherwise would be. Accordingly, for present happiness and success, and for heavenly son ship, we need the Holy Spirit.

Paul says: "As many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God." Romans 8:14. Allowing the Spirit into the life, to purge and purify, to guide and control, elevates us to the honorable status of sons and daughters of God. Whatever may be our social or financial status matters little compared with this exalted relationship which all may attain-and indeed must attain-if lasting happiness and eternal life is our goal.

Realizing his need of the Spirit, David prayed: "Create in me a clean heart, O God; and renew a right spirit within me. Cast me not away from Thy presence; and take not Thy Holy Spirit from me." Psalm 51:10,11. Not that the Spirit willingly deserts anyone. As we have seen in previous chapters, God is very reluctant to be separated from His creatures. But separation will come unless sin is abandoned in the life. The Holy Spirit cannot dwell side by side with sin.

More than anything else, more than money, clothing, homes, or possessions, more than work, health and strength, or education, we need the Holy Spirit. God knew this, and therefore recorded in His Word those timely warnings: "Quench not the Spirit "and "grieve not the Holy Spirit of God, whereby You are sealed unto the day of redemption." 1 Thessalonians 5:19; Ephesians 4:30.

What Is the Holy Spirit's Work?

THERE is an experience every one must have who desires to be saved. We "must be born again." John 3:7. This experience is known as "regeneration," and means that there is a completely new outlook in the life. It means that the head which was previously controlled by self, is now controlled by God. It means that the "old man "of sin has been dethroned, and that the "new man "of holy living has taken his place. It means that the dominion previously enjoyed by Satan has now passed to the Lord. (See Ephesians 4:22-24; Colossians 3:9, 10)

This "new birth," this "regeneration," this putting on of the "new man," is the work of the Holy Spirit. It is a work that is absolutely vital. Without it, heavenly hopes must fade. "Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God," said Jesus to Nicodemus. (John 3:3) And commenting on this wonderful experience which even the greatest sinner may have, He added: "The wind blows where it does, and thou hears the sound thereof, but cannot tell whence it comes, and whither it goes: so is every one that is born of the Spirit." John 3:8. This new birth breaks the fetters of old sins and evil habits as nothing else can. The tyranny of sin is such that resistance in one's own strength leads only to failure, and, in extreme cases such as dope addiction, to mental, nervous, and physical breakdown. But the Holy Spirit breaks all the chains of sin without breaking the mind or the body. A new power and life and zest and joy result from the Spirit's work of regeneration. "Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new." 2 Corinthians 5:17.

Just before Jesus ascended into heaven He promised that the Holy Spirit, or Comforter, would come to His disciples with abundant power. "When He is come," Jesus said, "He will reprove the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment." John 16:8. Here is an indication of the Spirit's methods in urging us to submit to His regenerating influence. The first step is to convince of sin. We must recognize that sin is sin, that it is ugly, unreasonable, inexcusable, and abhorrent to God. This is the first requisite in our return to God.

Secondly, the Spirit, having roused our sense of sin and guilt, shows us the way out. He points us to Christ. He reveals our Lord's righteousness which is freely imputed to those who have faith in Him.

Lastly, as an inducement to us to accept God's merciful provision of righteousness, the Holy Spirit seeks to convince us that there is a judgment to come. "For we must all appear before Christ's judgment seat in our true characters, in order that each may then receive an award for his actions in this life, in accordance with what he has done, whether it be good or worthless." 2 Corinthians 5:10 (Weymouth).

Having Performed His work of regeneration, the Holy Spirit begins the life-long task of purifying, strengthening, and ennobling our hearts and minds, a process which we have already referred to as "sanctification." Peter speaks of "the sanctification of the Spirit." 1 Peter 1:2. God's promise through the prophet Ezekiel was: "I will put My Spirit within you, and cause you to walk in My statutes, and

You shall keep My judgments, and do them.” Ezekiel 36:27. The work of sanctification, or growing in grace (2 Peter 3: 18), is one whereby this promise is worked out in our lives. With the Spirit’s help we become more and more completely obedient to, and in harmony with, God’s laws.

Furthermore, the Spirit will purify us by giving us an understanding of the will of God as described in the Bible. “When He, the Spirit of truth, is come,” said Jesus, “We will guide you into all truth.” John 16:13. Of course, whether God’s plan works successfully in us or not, depends largely on us. We shall not be guided “into all truth” if we fail to read and study the Bible for ourselves. God does not force enlightenment on us. Neither can the Spirit guide us if we are prejudiced, or unwilling to surrender pet theories or ideas. Because of prejudice, many of Christ’s “disciples went back, and walked no more with Him.” John 6:66. If we have open, willing hearts, then the Holy Spirit will gladly perform His transforming, educating, purifying work within us.

And the fruitage in our lives will be such as to give us a joy and peace and happiness, and a buoyant freedom from fear, such as would normally be considered impossible in this modern world. “The fruit of the Spirit,” said Paul, “is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance.” Galatians 5:22, 23. For want of these very virtues the world is languishing today.

How May We Receive the Holy Spirit?

WHAT the Lord said to His disciples, He says also to us: “Receive You the Holy Ghost.” John 20:22. He is not reluctant to give us His Spirit. Indeed, Jesus compares our heavenly Father’s attitude with that of an earthly father: “If a son shall ask bread of any of you that is a father, will you give him a stone? How much more shall your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask Him?” Luke 11:11-13. It would be an inhuman father that substituted stones for his child’s bread. Parents are instinctively anxious for their children to grow strong and healthy, and are willing even to sacrifice so as to attain this end. God is even more anxious that we, His children, shall grow spiritually strong and healthy. Therefore there can be no question as to His willingness to give us the Holy Spirit.

The great secret is, as James says, that we “ask in faith, nothing wavering. For he that wavers is like a wave of the sea driven with the wind and tossed.” James 1:6. Paul likewise expresses his wish - that we might receive the promise of the Spirit through faith.” Galatians 3:14.

This means that we must ask God for the Holy Spirit to possess our hearts, and then, regardless of our feelings in the matter, we must believe that the promise has been fulfilled. This is faith. (Mark 11:24) Of course, with such a request, there must be a willingness to forsake all sin, and willingness to go all the way with God. Such a faith as this will bring great power into the life.

“You shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you,” was the Lord’s last promise before ascending into heaven. (Acts 1:8.) John the Baptist had power, for He was “filled with the Holy Ghost.” Luke 1:15. On that spectacular day of Pentecost, the disciples had power for they “were all filled with the Holy Ghost.” Acts 2:4. Peter was “filled with the Holy Ghost.” Acts 4:8. Paul was “filled with the Holy Ghost.” Acts 13:9. It is our privilege, too, to be filled with the Holy Ghost.

Our conflict with evil, our plan to grow in grace and to do successful service for God will be accomplished “not by might, nor by power, but by My Spirit, said the Lord of Hosts.” Zechariah 4:6.

QUESTIONS ABOUT THE ANGELS

Who Are the Angels?

THE angels of God, says the apostle Paul, are -ministering spirits, sent forth to minister for them who shall be heirs of salvation.” Hebrews 1:14. Angels are celestial beings, seldom seen by men, but ever present for the purpose of assisting and protecting those who are seeking to walk with God. Jacob’s vision was given him by God to assure him of this wonderful fact. The record says that “he dreamed, and behold a ladder set up on the earth, and the top of it reached to heaven: and behold the angels of God ascending and descending on it.” Genesis 28:12.

These celestial beings are not, as some suppose, the disembodied spirits of men and women who have died. They are a different and higher order of beings than men, for we were made “a little lower than the angels.” Psalm 8:5. One proof that angels are distinct from human beings is the fact that before anyone on earth had died, God’s angels were present to prevent Adam and his family from re-entering the Garden of Eden. (Genesis 3:24) Furthermore, there is reason to believe that each angel was especially created by God, because, as Jesus said when speaking of the saints after the great resurrection: “They neither marry, nor are given in marriage, but are as the angels of God in heaven.” Matthew 22:30. The millions on the earth today have all sprung from two original beings, Adam and Eve, who were especially created by God. “And Adam called his wife’s name Eve; because she was the mother of all living.” Genesis 3:20. But it is not so with the angels. Each one was especially created.

In the book of Job angels are spoken of as the “sons of God” who “shouted for joy,” and as the “morning stars” who “sang together,” when this earth and all upon it were created by God. (Job 38:7) They are, with certain exceptions, holy ones who love their Maker, and are obedient to His commandments. (Psalm 103:20.) “The angels may have wider spheres of action and nobler forms of duty than ourselves, remarks E. H. Chapin, “but truth and right are to them and to us one and the same thing.” There are many orders of angels, including cherubim and seraphim, -but their precise nature is an unrevealed mystery. (Psalm 80:1; Isaiah 6:2; Colossians 1:16, 17) It is sufficient for us to know, however, that they are commissioned by God to serve struggling men and women. Each of us has his guardian angel, as Jesus suggested in His warning: “Take heed that You despise not one of these little ones; for I say unto you, that in heaven their angels do always behold the face of My Father which is in heaven.” Matthew 18:10.

“The angels appointed to minister to the children of God have at all times access to His presence. Thus God’s people, exposed to the deceptive power and unsleeping malice of the prince of darkness, and in conflict with all the forces of evil, are assured of the unceasing guardianship of heavenly angels.”-The Great Controversy, page 513.

How Do the Angels Work?

THE angels work in many ways, and for many purposes. One of the most striking pictures of their activity is that given by John in Revelation, where he describes four angels holding back the winds of strife which are about to be released upon a doomed world. (Revelation 7:1-3) These winds are symbolic of the political strife and upheaval that will come upon the world in the last days just before Christ returns. The four angels are in control under God’s direction, and earth’s final calamities are stayed so that God’s people might be scaled. Thus angelic power at this time is used for the preservation of the saints.

. This picture of John’s is symbolic of the work of protection which the angels have been commissioned to do from the beginning. Says the psalmist: “He shall give His angels charge over thee, to keep thee in all thy ways. They shall bear thee up in their hands, lest thou dash thy foot against a stone.” Psalm 91:11, 12. And David assures us that “the angel of the Lord encamps round about them that fear Him, and delivers them.” Psalm 34:7. If we truly love God then we can be certain of the protective influence of our guardian angels.

But what precisely do they do, and how do they do it? The full answer to these questions will not be known till our life’s records are, in God’s good time, opened to our view. But the Scriptures contain many striking examples of which Daniel in the lions’ den is outstanding. Condemned to share the company of ravenous lions, Daniel miraculously survived the ordeal. His enemies’ plans were thereby frustrated because, as Daniel assured King Darius: “My God hath sent His angel, and hath shut the lions’ mouths, that they have not hurt me.” Daniel 6:22.

Even more spectacular was ‘ the deliverance of Jerusalem under King Hezekiah when the city was threatened by Sennacherib and his host of 185,000 Assyrians in 701 BC. Here indeed, was a hopeless situation. Humanly speaking, Jerusalem was doomed. But because Hezekiah’s trust was in God, deliverance came through the intervention of an angel: “The angel of the Lord went forth, and smote in the camp of the Assyrians a hundred and four score and five thousand. And when they [the Jews] arose in the morning, behold, they [the Assyrians] were all dead corpses.” Isaiah 37:36. Historians may explain this Assyrian calamity as resulting from a sudden attack of some virulent disease but the fact is that they fell. God’s people were preserved by angelic intervention. (2 Chronicles 32:1-22.)

Though, as in Daniel’s case, God’s messengers are not always seen, in the case of the prophet Elisha’s deliverance from Dothan the protecting angels assumed the visible form of armed charioteers. The surrounding Syrian army planned to kill the prophet, because through him the Lord revealed the military secrets of the Syrians to the king of Israel. Seeing the surrounding army, Elisha’s servant became alarmed. But the prophet was calm, and prayed for the young man. In response to this prayer “the Lord opened the eyes of the young man; and he saw: and, behold, the mountain was full of horses and chariots of fire round about Elisha.”2 Kings 6:17. The Syrians’ attempt failed because they were temporarily smitten with blindness. (Verse 18.)

Those same angels are at our service today, “ministering spirits, sent forth to minister “to the “heirs of salvation.” There are many authentic records of angel ministry in our day which are similar to the above examples. Like the experience of John Wesley whose life was saved from two desperadoes in a lonely wood me night. The great Gospel preacher, riding alone, drew ever nearer his would-be killers who waited in the woods. When he reached them, they saw not one, but three riders, with Wesley in the middle and were afraid to strike. Wesley was completely unaware of his Protectors. Hearing later from those desperate men, after they were converted, Wesley was convinced that God’s promise of angel protection was fulfilled on his behalf that night.

Thus will it be with us, though perhaps in less spectacular ways. As we travel, as we move among the traffic and the crowds, as we pursue our daily business whatever it may be, we can never tell how frequently the angel ministers preserve us and lead us. It may be some small thing we are led to do-or are prevented from doing, so that an unforeseen-and maybe unrealized-calamity is averted. It

may be that someone is influenced to make some decision in our favor. It may be any of a thousand things, seemingly insignificant, yet ordained of God and executed by angels, because of the Father's personal interest in the welfare of those who love Him.

Who Is the Devil?

BUT not all the angels are interested in our welfare, for besides the numberless host of the angels of God whose daily task is to assist us ' is a smaller host of evil angels led by the devil. Their sole concern is to drag us down to the same ruin that will eventually engulf them. The Lord Jesus warned of the "everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels." Matthew 25:41.

The leader of this malevolent host of "demons," or "wicked spirits" "who work not for, but against, those who shall be heirs of salvation, was Lucifer, the most exalted created being in the universe. Hence he is the one who has experienced the greatest fall. Ezekiel speaks of him under the figure of the king of Tyrus, and says that our arch-enemy in ages past was "the anointed cherub that covers," who stood in "the holy mountain of God." Lucifer occupied that supreme angelic position in heaven as God's immediate attendant. He was the angel whose wings overspread the everlasting throne. And of this exalted being the prophet goes on to say: "Thou was perfect in thy

ways from the day that thou was created, till iniquity was found in thee." Ezekiel 28:13-15. His heart was lifted up with pride (verse 17), and his spirit was slowly embittered with envy. He resented his subservience to God and His law, and resentment gradually developed into open rebellion. This tragedy is briefly described by Isaiah, who asks: "How art thou fallen from heaven, O Lucifer, son of the morning! Thou has said in your heart, I will ascend into heaven, I will exalt my throne above the stars of God: I will be like the most High." Isaiah 14:12-14.

God did not create a devil. He created Lucifer, noble and perfect. Having a free will, Lucifer succumbed to pride, and eventually chose the way of rebellion, enlisting one-third of the angels on his side. We have no record of the merciful warnings and entreaties which the rebels must have received from the God of love, but we do know that every inducement to be loyal was spurned. And so "there was war in heaven: Michael [Christ] and His angels fought against the dragon; and the dragon fought and his angels, and prevailed not; neither was their place found any more in heaven. And the great dragon was cast out, that old serpent, called the Devil, and Satan, which deceives the whole world: he was cast out into the earth, and his angels were cast out with him." Revelation 12:7-9. Our Lord briefly referred to this tragic event when He said: "I beheld Satan as lightning fall from heaven." Luke 10:18. And ever since, that unhappy host of "angels that sinned" and "which kept not their first estate," have pursued with venomous fury the evil purposes of their satanic leader. (2 Peter 2:4; Jude 6)

The devil is primarily responsible for all the sin and misery and strife and contention in the world today. He would ban God from men's thinking and planning, and set their minds on fire with ideas and philosophies whose end is ruin. "The devil, as a roaring lion, walks about, seeking whom he may devour," says Peter, therefore we must "be sober, be vigilant." 1 Peter 5:8. He knows he is doomed, and that his time is short, therefore his efforts to demoralize and pervert humanity are put forth with the utmost vehemence. Because of this, a woe is pronounced on the inhabitants of this earth. (Revelation 12:12.)

But we are not left without a defense. We would, of course, be overcome if we resisted him in our own strength. But if the Spirit of the Lord dwells within us, and if we submit humbly to God, asking Him for power to overcome, then victory will be ours. "When the enemy shall come in like a flood, the Spirit of the Lord shall lift up a standard against him." Isaiah 59:19. "Submit yourselves therefore to God, Resist the devil, and he will flee from you!" James 4:7.

How Does the Devil Work?

EVERY activity of the devil is for the one purpose of frustrating the Gospel of Christ. "The god of this world [Satan] hath blinded the minds of them which believe not," says Paul, "lest the light of the glorious Gospel of Christ, should shine unto them." 2 Corinthians 4:4. All his plans, all his deceptions, all his falsehoods, are for the one great purpose of depriving men of the blessings and light of the Gospel. He works in many ways to do this.

If ever the Gospel of Jesus were needed, it is today. Yet at no time have its foundations been more vigorously assailed. This is the devil's work. As Paul with prophetic foresight surveyed conditions today, he warned: "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. And they shall turn away their ears from the truth, and shall be turned unto fables." 2 Timothy 4:3. Even stronger language is used of these "fables" which shall supplant the truth of the Gospel in the last days, for Paul elsewhere calls them "doctrines of devils." He describes also a condition in which many no longer listen to God, but give "heed to seducing spirits." 1 Timothy 4:1. These "doctrines of devils" are actually counterfeits of the doctrines of God, possessing, as counterfeits usually do, an outward appearance of genuineness. There is no Bible teaching which has not been denied, and for which an attractive perversion has not been prepared. Of course, Satan depends on human

agents to teach his errors, the kind of instructors whom many in the world, according to Paul, will “heap unto themselves.” Isaiah had cause to complain of them in his day, and pronounced a woe upon them. (Isaiah 5:20.)

The effect of all Satan’s delusions is to deaden our sense of sin, to encourage a state of spiritual slumber, to misrepresent God, His law, and His ultimate intentions, and to unfit us for the great day of Christ’s return.

Of all Satan’s endeavors to enlist us on his side, one of the most effective is that of modern Spiritualism. As we have already seen, the Bible teaches that the dead are peacefully sleeping, and that they will thus remain until the great resurrection day when Christ returns. But Spiritualism would have us believe that the dead are very much alive. According to the Spiritualist view, there is no waiting period whatever between death and the enjoyment of more abundant life in other spheres. It is claimed that the dead live on, and that far from lacking a knowledge of affairs on earth, as the Bible affirms, they actually possess a greater knowledge and keener emotions. (Job 14:21; Ecclesiastes 9:5, 6.)

Spiritualism claims to draw aside the veil between the consciousness of this life, and the “consciousness” of death. According to a prominent medium, it is “the lifting of a curtain between two planes of consciousness.” (The Either-Or of Spiritualism, page 4.) Another medium, defining the meaning of this popular modern movement, says that it “is the only doctrine which gives a definite and substantial existence to the spirit world. And which allows for the straightforward and uninterrupted progress of the human spirit from the elementary conditions of human life on this earth, up to, and through the higher phases of existence in the spirit world.” - The History of Spiritualism, page 4.

And in an attempt to prove that Spiritualism is “true,” the alleged spirit forms and voices of loved ones who are dead, are produced in the seance chamber. Sir Arthur Conan Doyle, an apostle of Spiritualism, in his autobiography claimed: “I have clasped materialized hands. I have had long conversations with the direct voice. I have smelt the peculiar ozone-like smell of ectoplasm. I have seen spirits walk round the room in fair light, and join in the talk of the company.” - Memories and Adventures, page 402.

Such familiar spirits are, however, nothing but the work of Satan and his fallen angels. By cleverly assuming the form of our departed dead, they seek to give the impression that the dead are really alive, and therefore contradict the Bible teaching that the dead are inert, and remain so until the resurrection. As Cardinal Lepicier declared in his book *The Unseen World*: “It must be evident to all impartial minds that Spiritualism is in reality a most effective means of drawing away from God.” He recognized that the ghostly forms of the darkened seance chamber were the work of intelligences superior to the human soul in power and acumen, but of base morality.”

In Old Testament times, and throughout history, in every nation, Satan and his angels have used this most effective method of fascinating men and women, and of leading them away from God and the Bible.

Spiritualism leads to complacency about the future. It claims that survival after death is automatic, ghostly materialization being used as proof. Jesus, however, declared that “he that hath not the Son of God hath not life.”¹ John 5:12. Spiritualism says, no! Whether we are Christians or not, it claims that we are all destined to enjoy fuller life and unhindered spiritual progress after death. Because of this claim that endless life in higher spheres is to be the experience of us all, regardless of our moral status, Spiritualism naturally weakens the urge to struggle against pleasurable sins, and destroys the urge to sacrifice for the cause of truth.

So a loving God gives the following warnings in His Word: “Regard not them which have familiar spirits, neither seek after wizards.” Leviticus 19:31. And again: “There shall not be found among you anyone that uses divination, or an observer of times, or an enchanter, or a witch, or a charmer, or a consultant with familiar spirits, or a wizard, or a necromancer. For all that do these things are an abomination unto the Lord.” Deuteronomy 18:9-12.

The Bible foresaw that in the last days the spirits of devils working miracles would go forth among the nations, “to gather them to the battle of that great day of God Almighty.” Revelation 16:14. One way whereby these evil angels will achieve their purpose, will be-as in the past-by appearing as familiar spirits. Examples of leading men-like Hitler who had his own private medium-who have resorted to the spirits for advice, are by no means scarce.

God’s inspired advice is: “When they tell you to consult mediums and ghosts that cheep and gibber in low murmurs, ask them if a nation should not rather consult its God. Say ‘ Why consult the dead on behalf of the living? Consult the Message and the Counsel of God! ‘ “Isaiah 8:19, 20 (Moffatt).

Satan and his host are engaged in a vast conspiracy of evil for our overthrow. But God is on our side. And the holy angels are on our side. They are anxious to see us safely through to the eternal joys which lie just ahead of us. If we trust in God, even the most deceptive devices of Satan will prove unavailing.

Why Was Not the Devil Destroyed?

THE devil will be destroyed one day; of this we are assured. One of the great purposes of Jesus was “that through death He might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil.” Hebrews 2:14. John visualized the dramatic scenes which will finally and forever bring down the curtain on the activities of Satan and his hosts. “Fire came down from God out of heaven, and devoured them,” he says. (Revelation 20:7-9)

But why wait until some future date to terminate his nefarious activities? Why, in fact, should God have waited at all, when Lucifer made it clear that he would never repent? Surely God knew the suffering that would result from sin. If He is opposed to suffering, why did He not strike down the devil and his rebels at the very beginning?

The answer is, that whereas God knew well enough where sin would lead, no one else did. They had therefore to have some demonstration. So the devil was permitted to live. The unfortunate victim of his activity is our planet, and for the duration of its history he has been given the chance to prove whether his way of rebellion is to be preferred to God’s way of loyal obedience to the moral law. The answer is obvious. Satan’s way leads to pain, and grief, and death. The unfallen beings of the universe can thereby see that for happiness, health, and life, God’s way is the only answer.

Had Satan and his host been destroyed at once, the unfallen beings would have developed a fear of God. Doubts as to His justice would have arisen. They would forever have wondered whether Satan was right after all. Loyalty to God would thereafter have sprung from fear rather than love. So God let Satan live. And the colossal sufferings on earth, the strife, the sorrow, the friction, and confusion, and the periodic bloodbaths, all tell in trumpet tones that “tribulation and anguish” will be “upon every soul of man that does evil.” But “Blessed is the man that trusts in the Lord, and whose hope the Lord is.” Romans 2:9; Jeremiah 17:7.

“O taste and see that the Lord is good: blessed is the man that trusts in Him.” Psalm 34:8.

QUESTIONS ABOUT THE HOME

What Is the Secret of a Successful Home?

HOME should be the happiest place on earth. In many instances it actually is, though in other cases it fails to serve more than the mundane though useful purpose of providing accommodation for the family. Home is the most important place in the world. Conditions in the home largely determine the moral and spiritual state of the nation, for home is the heart of society. And as the wise man suggests, the heart should be kept “with all diligence; for out of it are the issues of life.” Proverbs 4:23. It has rightly been remarked: “the strength of a nation is in the intelligent and well ordered homes of the people.” Bad homes, divided homes, unhappy homes, usually result in men and women who are morally deficient, and whose influence tends to be depressing and debasing. It has been noted that the great majority of criminals come from homes which are unsatisfactory and unsympathetic.

Domestic happiness is essential. Where it prevails, home becomes a heaven on earth—a foretaste of that glorified world where all hearts will be united with a spirit of love and kindness. Such a home is, happily, not dependent on material things. Domestic bliss is attainable by all, regardless of money, food, clothes, or furnishings. We know, of course, that where such bliss is sought in the right way, the material needs will be supplied by God. (Matthew 6:33.)

The secret of success in the home life, as indeed, for life generally, is that criticism, faultfinding, nagging, contempt, callousness, unkindness, together with their host of mortifying companions, be rigorously shunned and expelled, and that forbearance, sympathy, mercy, and love take their place. This is a good summary not only of domestic needs, but of the world’s basic need today. “By this shall all men know that You are My disciples, if You have love one to another.” John 13:35. A home with real love in it, is a home indeed. A home without love, becomes merely the living quarters for its inmates.

Love is the basic and adequate solution to domestic success. Where the home follows God’s pattern, being ruled by the spirit of love and forbearance, it becomes, as Spurgeon once said, a place where the heavenly angels could stay without feeling out of their element.

There is beauty all around
When there’s love at home;
There is joy in every sound,
When there’s love at home.

Sweeter sings the brook by, Brighter beams the azure sky; Oh, there’s One who smiles on high
When there’s love at home.”

Such a condition is possible through Jesus Christ. If we open our hearts for His Holy Spirit to come in, He will gladly take possession of us, and sweeten all our relationships with each other. (Revelation 3:20.) This is the basic step of faith—that of submission to God. Having done this, we must resist the efforts of our souls' enemy to mar the tranquillity of our home. We must act as if we really believed God and His angels were the unseen guests in our homes.

This resistance of the enemy will take the form of a conscious effort by husbands and wives to follow the Bible's many precepts. Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave Himself for it."

Ephesians 5:25. Peter advises husbands to dwell with their partners "giving honor unto the wife, as unto the weaker vessel, and as being heirs together of the grace of life; that your prayers be not hindered." 1 Peter 3:7. The wise man advocates that the husband "live joyfully with the wife whom thou lovest." Ecclesiastes 9:9. And in the very beginning of our history, before sin disfigured this fair earth, God, who planned and ordained the family way of life also ordained that "a man leave his father and mother, and shall cleave unto his wife." Genesis 2:24. Not that father and mother are to be dishonored, ignored, despised, or disliked. But that for successful home life the wife must be pre-eminent in her husband's consideration, and so also must the husband have priority in the heart of his wife.

The Bible has much to say to wives. The good wife "looks well to the ways of her household, and eats not the bread of idleness." Proverbs 31:27. She will be industrious, clean, neat, and mindful of her partner's and family's needs. And, as Paul says, she will "be grave sober, faithful in all things." 1 Timothy 3:11. For all members of the family is the wise and timely entreaty that is so often ignored: "Be ye kind one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you." Ephesians 4:32. We must manifest as much tenderness and mercy with each other as we need God to manifest toward us. We must be more reluctant to criticize and readier to commend. We should follow the good advice printed on the face of a watch presented to a young man by his father-in-law: "Say something nice to Sarah every day." Kind words soften and gladden burdened hearts, and deepen our mutual love. Above all, realizing our time here is short, custodians of happy homes will do all they can to assure, not only the present happiness, but also the eternal well-being of each other.

True love will prevail in the home where God is loved supremely. And His rich blessing will be poured down like a refreshing shower on every member of the home. Such a spirit depends upon daily contact with Jesus Christ. To this end, the Old Book must have its just place in the daily program, and the privilege of family and private prayer will be recognized as essential.

"To Adam, Paradise was home. To the good among his descendants, home is paradise." Today, as ever, there are countless homes with God's blessing on them miniature heavens in a world of strife. Builders of such homes constitute the very wealth of the earth.

An artist once sought to portray a scene of peace. He painted a picture of strife and upheaval, of a darkened, stormy sky, with lightning flashing, wildly dashing waves, and battered rocks. But high in a rocky cleft, sheltered from the wind and rain and sea spray, was a seagull peacefully sitting on her nest with her young. How wonderfully symbolic of the ideal home, the Christian home, in this world of strife.

Better than gold is a peaceful home, Where all the fireside charities come; The shrine of love and the heaven of life, Hallowed by mother, or sister, or wife. However humble the home may be, Or tried with sorrows by heaven's decree, The blessings that never were bought or sold, And center there, are better than gold. Anon.

[How Should We Train Our Children?](#)

WE should train our children with the thought in mind that not only is there this present life to live, but an eternal heaven to gain. The thought of preparation for eternity should take precedence over everything else; and the desire by God's grace to qualify as unbroken families for those eternal joys should be uppermost in our minds. The life and training in the home should serve this purpose of preparation. And lest some may think it unwise, in view of the insistent demands of this present life, to regard eternity as anything more than a secondary interest, let it be remembered that among those best suited to fulfil present obligations, who work most conscientiously, and who serve their fellow the best are usually those whose first interest centers on God.

It is good to remember that as the twig is bent, so will the tree be inclined. Milton, truly remarked, "Childhood shows the man as morning shows the day." In many homes children have an unfair start. Divided homes, homes broken by parental separation, godless homes, homes where insufficient time, if any, is positively set aside for the instructing of the young, homes from which Christ is absent, are homes which set a disfiguring mould on the child mind. The prevalence of such homes is one of the sign of the lot days, and hence, many children, as the prophecy foresaw, would be disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy." 2 Timothy 3:2.

Parents should also bear in mind the inevitable law of heredity which we have already discussed, and should so live that the outworking of the principle, "Like father, like son," will be to the child's advantage, not hampering him with any grave shortcomings.

Children are a sacred trust, depending far more on parents for their early molding than upon the school or church. There will be little fear of their dishonoring the family name or of losing their way to heaven if they are trained aright from the earliest dawn of intelligence. God's Word says: "Train up a child in the way he should go:

and when he is old, he will not depart from it." Proverbs 22:6. God wants that training to be such that the children may be able to share with their parents the joys of eternity. And so fathers, whom the Bible recognize as the heads of the household, are admonished: "Provoke not your children to wrath: but bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord." Ephesians 6:4. The same advice applies also to mothers-who undoubtedly exercise the strongest influence in the early years. This can best be done by daily family worship, a readiness to take every opportunity to speak on the facts of salvation, and above all, by the parents themselves setting a godly example.

Here is what God told those parents of ancient Israel: "And these words, which I command thee this day, shall be in your heart. And thou shalt teach them diligently unto thy children, and shall talk of them when thou sits in thy house, and when thou walks by the way, and when thou lies down, and when thou rises up." Deuteronomy 6:6,7. It is dear that no time is inappropriate to talk of God, of His love, and of His law, to our children. These things should be by far the biggest filings in our lives, and the children should be encouraged to think on them constantly. Yet what do we often find? Outside of school, the molding of the child's mind is largely left to the doubtful mercies of swaggering, gun-brandishing cinema characters, and of the "Deadwood Dick" heroes of the comics and popular thrillers. It is born in children to copy their heroes, for hero worship is instinctive. We should see, therefore, that their heroes are not the cheap and selfish and ambitious characters who figure so prominently in modern literature and on the screen, but the truly noble stalwarts of the Bible and of history.

Life is shaped and molded by the thoughts, and thoughts depend on how they are fed. If they are fed aright, life will be right. Noble thoughts mean noble deeds and actions. No more can true nobility emerge from a mind that hasn't the least notion of the real standards of that nobility than can pure water flow from a polluted spring just as "the way of transgressors is hard" (Proverbs 13:15), so, even in this world, the way of the noble is extremely pleasant. They have a peace of mind and a buoyancy of spirit which means far more than material abundance. For the best of this present life then, and for the certainty of the life to come, we should feed our children on the ennobling, fascinating stories of the Bible, at the same time encouraging them to commune with the God of the Bible.

Here are some of the hundreds of Bible stories:

"How the World Began" (Genesis 1); "Eve and the Serpent" (Genesis 3:1-13); The Story of Noah's Ark (Genesis 6, 7, 8). "Abram's Battle with the Kings" (Genesis 14:8-10); "The Sad Story of Lot's Wife" (Genesis 19:1-26). "Saved by an Angel" (Genesis 22:1-14); "When Jacob Cheated" (Genesis 27); "The Coat of Many Colors" (Genesis 37); "Pharaoh's Dream" (Genesis 41). "How Baby Moses Was Saved" (Exodus 2: 1-10); "Sea Crossing Without Boats" (Exodus 14:5-31); "Bread from Heaven" (Exodus 16:4-31); "How Jericho Fell" (Joshua 6:1-20). "Gideon's Great Victory" (Judges 6, 7). "When God Called Samuel" (1 Samuel 3); "The Giant Killer" (1 Samuel 17); "Elijah and the Ravens" (1 Kings 17); "Caught by Bears" (2 Kings 2:19-25). A Great Defeat (2 Kings 19); "Fire walkers" (Daniel 3); "The Lions' Den" (Daniel 6). Stories of Jesus and the disciples are to be found throughout the gospels, Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John, and the Acts of the Apostles.

One day, when we stand before the great judgment seat, the question will be asked of every parent: "Where is the flock that was given thee, thy beautiful flock?" Jeremiah 13:20. How grand to be able to respond: "They are right here, Lord, all ready for Thy kingdom." Does Bodily Welfare Really Matter?

IN every way the welfare of our bodies is important. The ideal home is one in which each member is not only healthy in mind but also healthy in body. The efficiency of the home-makers largely depends upon their health. If health is lost the will and power to work is diminished and sometimes destroyed. Industriousness, high principles, moral purity and stamina, flourish best where good health is enjoyed.

Few things affect our influence so much as health. Distraught nerves, dyspeptic stomachs, aches, and pains, are things which undermine our vigor, our looks, our mental processes, our tempers, and our dispositions. They weaken our capacity to work, and have a distinct tendency to transform our influence from one of charm and brightness to one of misery and gloom.

No wonder that the godly martyr, William Tyndale said: "The morality of clean blood ought to be one of the first lessons taught us by our pastors and teachers." He recognized, too, that "the physical is the substratum of the spiritual; and this fact ought to give the food we eat and the air we breathe a transcendent significance."

More important than the consideration of health in its relation to our power to work and think is the fact that our bodies belong to God. They are not our own. All too popular is the notion that though our souls may be God's our bodies are ours to do with as we like. It is, however, a mistake to think that we are at liberty to eat and drink and do just what we like, and to dress how we like. In all these

things we should remember Paul's inspired assurance. He asks: "Know You not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you, which You have of God, and You are not your own? For You are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's." 1 Corinthians 6:19, 20.

Our bodies are God's. They are His because He made us. They are doubly His because He purchased us with His own blood. "You were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold.... but with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot." 1 Peter 1:18, 19. Our bodies are temples of the Holy Spirit. A parallel has been drawn between our body temples and God's ancient temple on earth, which compares our hearts with the Most Holy place, our minds with the Holy place, and our bodies with the outer court. Defilement of any part of the temple or its sacred precincts was a serious sin. Thus it is that Paul gives the warning: "If any man defile the temple of God, him shall God destroy: for the temple of God is holy, which temple You are." 1 Corinthians 3:17.

This simply means that bodily health must be guarded, and that any practice or habit, or article of food or drink or clothing which impairs the health, should be discarded.

There is a peculiar nation among some religious thinkers that the body is essentially evil and is at enmity with the soul. Thus throughout the ages we have fascinating yet tragic examples of "holy" men and women who did all they could to resist and refuse even the most basic demands of the body. We read of monks who denied themselves all food but dry bread baked annually, and who drank only water; of misguided zealots like Simeon Stylites who, like scores of others whom he inspired, spent decades living on the top of a pole. Of the Flagellants who swarmed through Europe during the Middle Ages, largely bereft of clothes, but equipped with whips by means of which they publicly flogged themselves till the blood flowed; and of such milder yet harmful practices as the wearing of irritating horse-hair shirts and vests.

God is dishonored by such practices, and grieves that anyone should have such a wrong evaluation of the physical body. Our bodies are sacred, and their legitimate demands for wholesome food, for rest, for reasonable comfort, for shelter, for proper clothing, must never be ignored or willingly denied.

Ideal homes depend on health. Useful labor depends on health. Service for others and for God depends on health. It is dear then, as Dr. Samuel Johnson recognized, that to preserve health is a moral and religious duty."

Temple of God's Holy Spirit,
Not my own, this human frame,
Purchased by my Savior's merit
For the glory of His name.
R. M. Milliman

How Can We Maintain Health?

THE Lord, who regards our bodies as His holy temples, has naturally given good advice in His Word on health matters. For the best mental and physical health the most important step needed is that we live in harmony with God's commandments. The Lord's assurance to ancient Israel is just as applicable to us today: "If thou wilt diligently hearken to the voice of the Lord thy God, and wilt do that which is right in His sight, and wilt give ear to His commandments, and keep all His statutes, I will put none of these diseases upon thee, which I have brought upon the Egyptians: for I am the Lord, that heals thee." Exodus 15:26. This means that if we sincerely seek to obey God, He will preserve our health. If, furthermore, we do all we can to fulfil God's will by helping others, then "your health shall spring forth speedily." Isaiah 58:8. If we daily wait upon the Lord "by prayer and Bible reading, then "the Lord shall renew "our strength." He will give vigor and energy. (Isaiah 40:31) There are exceptions to this general rule, of course, as in the case of Job, where God may, for some special reason, permit suffering to come to those who are innocent.

Living in harmony with God will provide us with that most essential factor for glowing health-a dear conscience. Paul knew the value of this, for he said: ' I exercise myself to have always a conscience void of offence toward God, and toward men.' Acts 24:16. The sense of shame and guilt which go with a guilty conscience sap the energy, dull the mind, and tarnish the whole life. But a buoyant sense of positive fellowship with Jesus Christ makes life a pleasure and creates a feeling of exhilaration.

A happy mind is essential for good health. Where joy and gladness prevail-as will certainly be the case if we are faithfully following Jesus Christ-such devitalizing emotions as depression, guilt, and discouragement will be banished. Says the wise man: "A merry heart does good like a medicine: but a broken spirit dries the bones." Proverbs 17:22. Health and vitality are sapped by such emotions as worry, anxiety, and fear, which are here spoken of as "a broken spirit."

“Clinical experience indicates that the strain on the organs of the body may be greater in response to unfavorable emotional situations than in the case of inordinate physical activity.” - Harold Shryock, M.D., in *Happiness and Health*, page 43.

The relation between the mind and physical health is stronger than many imagine. The “mind can induce disease and even death,” says Eric S. Waterhouse, DD, MA. He gives several examples, among them the following: “ There are many similar cases of savages who, believing they have broken taboo and must die, collapse and die without any physical cause whatever being responsible. No doubt exists as to the actuality of such happenings. Nor, on the other hand, is there any doubt that many live by sheer will to live. During the war, a Canadian in the hospital to which I ministered was given up by nurses and doctors as hopeless. But the man, desperately anxious for his wife and children, struggled passionately for life. Even in delirium he was all the time repeating, ‘I got to get better,’ ‘I got to get better.’ His will performed the miracle.”-*Psychology and Pastoral Work*, page 212.

A healthy mind in a healthy body is the ideal, but the latter is dependent on the former. The power of God and the truth of His Word are best able to maintain mental health. “And the peace of God, which passes all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus. Finally, brethren, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things.” *Philippians 4:7, 8*. “Thus said the Lord, ... Ask for the old paths, where is the good way, and walk therein, and You shall find rest unto your souls.” *Jeremiah 6:16*.

What Shall We Eat?

HEALTH depends not only on how we think, but on what we eat and drink. Wrong eating is responsible for a major proportion of the world’s sickness. The first rule is: “Eat that which is good.” *Isaiah 55:2*. But what is good? We cannot go far wrong if we follow, as far as possible, the diet which was originally intended for man. This was composed of fruits, grains, nuts, and vegetables. (*Genesis 1:29*) During eternity this fruit diet will once more be reverted to. Obviously then, the ideal is that we regulate our diet so that it accords as nearly as possible with God’s original plan.

In the fruits of the earth and also dairy produce, are all the food elements necessary for perfect health. Meat is definitely not essential for health. It is acid-forming, and a predisposing factor in many ailments. Furthermore, any food which renders the blood tissues impure, paves the way for cancer; for healthy tissues are known to be immune from this dread disease which attacks one person in six. Meat is a great offender in this respect. The eminent British surgeon, Sir W. Arthur Lane, said: “Cancer is the great human menace. It is increasing by leaps and bounds. What we should do, if we would avoid cancer, is to eat whole meal bread, raw fruits, and vegetables, shunning all meat.”

Meat-eating was permitted by God as an emergency after the Flood. Until the Flood men lived for hundreds of years-some to nine hundred years and more. But after the Flood, when meat began to be freely eaten, the life span was suddenly reduced to just over one hundred years. Certain animals and fish, however, have never been permitted by God for food. These are known as “unclean” meats, and they are listed in *Leviticus eleven*. Cattle, sheep, deer, goats, were permitted, for they pass the test God has given -they are cloven-footed, and chew the cud. (*Leviticus 11:3*) All animals failing to measure up to these two requirements are “unclean.” This rules out the rabbit, the hare, the horse, and the pig. Their flesh is especially defiling to the body.

Pigs are scavengers, and are subject to a parasite known as *trichinella spiralis*. This parasite, which is a small round worm, may also attack those who eat the flesh of the pig, causing a disease known as trichinosis. Symptoms are various, such as cramps, diarrhea, etc., often diagnosed as blood poisoning. All parts of the body may be affected. Once the parasitic worms are safely lodged in the muscles, they remain for the lifetime of the infected person. There is no known cure. Neither is there any infallible means of withholding infected meat from the shops. Samples of meat may be clear, yet the very next section of the carcass may be heavily contaminated. Undoubtedly the Lord knew what He was doing when He forbade the use of pork as food.

Certain fish are known to be poison, according to Bruce W. Halstead, M.D., who has given study to the subject of poisonous and venomous fishes. Hence American troops in the east were directed that “tropical marine fishes without scales were to be left alone.” Thousands of years ago, the Lord Himself drew the clear dividing line. He gave this command concerning fish: “All that have fins and scales shall You eat: and whatsoever hath not fins and scales You may not eat; it is unclean unto you.” *Deuteronomy 14:9, 10*. This leaves such as the herring, the cod, and the salmon, but rules out all shell fish, crabs, shrimps, eels, skate, etc.

The safest rule, however, is to follow a vegetarian diet, eating wholesome, unrefined, unprocessed foods, as far as possible.

It is said of the Lord’s diet: “Butter and honey shall He eat, that He may know to refuse the evil and choose the good,” *Isaiah 7:15*. From such texts as this it is clear that moral sense and ethical discrimination are strongly related to what we eat. Whatever we eat, however, should be eaten in moderation and” to the glory of God.” *1 Corinthians 10:31*.

But diet is not by any means the only physical contributory factor to sound health. There are harmful habits which should be dropped if good health is to be assured. For instance, we cannot smoke tobacco to God's glory. Tobacco is actually a long-term killer. It increases blood pressure so that, in the average smoker, for every minute of time the heart beats ten more times than it should, it sours the stomach, upsets digestion, plays havoc with the nerves, destroys brain cells, especially in youth, and predisposes to cancer - particularly cancer of the lips, tongue, mouth, throat, and lungs. It is especially to be avoided by women, and most of all by expectant and nursing mothers.

Alcoholic drinks will also find no demand whatever among those whose great concern is to live healthfully, happily, usefully, and eternally. "Wine is a mocker, strong drink is raging: and whosoever is deceived thereby is not wise." Proverbs 20:1.

The power of the Holy Spirit is more than sufficient to break any fetter of diet of habit, and to enable us to reach the very highest ideals. When a keen sense of Christ's love for us fills our souls, and our hearts are yielded to His control, it becomes the most desirable thing for us to do only those things that please Him." John 8:29.

QUESTIONS ABOUT PRESENT TRUTH

Has God A Special Message for Today?

GOD has a special message for the world in these last days of its history. The ancient assurance, "The Lord Eternal never does anything without telling His servants the prophets," is just as true today as ever it was. (Amos 3:7, Moffatt.) Today we are on the verge of things infinitely more momentous than even the world-shattering deluge of Noah's day. Once again God is about to make a spectacular intervention in world affairs, and just as surely as righteous Noah was inspired to preach his message of warning for 120 years before the Flood (2 Peter 2:5; Genesis 6:3), so surely has God a message of salvation and warning especially adapted to our day.

This message is "the present truth." It is God's ultimatum to a world whose long epoch of sin and injustice is about to end. Its terms are recorded by the prophet John in Revelation 14:6-11. It is a message of salvation, but also one of solemn warning.

Basic in this final proclamation is "the everlasting Gospel," which is to go to "every nation, and kindred, and tongue, and people." Revelation 14:6. No message of God is complete without the assurance of His love and saving power, and the warnings which follow are not an evidence of God's anger, but of His desire to save us. It is a striking fact that at the very time Satan intensifies to its highest pitch his effort to blot out God's Gospel message on earth, that message is receiving its widest publicity-thanks to such media as the radio, television, and the printing press.

The urgency of the message is next impressed by the declaration that "the hour of God's judgment is come." Verse 7. It is no longer future, it is a present fact. This is clearly the investigative judgment already described; a judgment which, as we see here, must precede Christ's Second Advent, for its proclamation is to be an inducement to impenitent sinners to avail themselves of the blessings of "the everlasting Gospel," and thus prepare to meet their God.

Verse seven is also a call to "worship Him that made heaven, and earth, and the sea, and the fountains of waters." Thus God's final message calls attention to the Creator, and hence urges upon men the need to observe the Sabbath which is the weekly memorial of the creation. (Exodus 20:8-11) Emphasis on this aspect of truth is needful, in view of the popular theories which would substitute blind, evolutionary forces for an intelligent, all powerful God.

The second phase of this final message declares Babylon is fallen, because she made all nations drink of the wine of the wrath of her fornication." Verse 8. Here is a warning against the confusion of the religious world generally. Babel is a fitting symbol for the diversity of voices which characterize modern Christendom, for it was at Babel that human speech was diversified. (Genesis 11:1-9.) "Back to the Bible" is the only safe plan for those who would avoid the bewilderment of the conflicting voices today.

Babylon's "fornication" "signifies the unfaithfulness which professes allegiance to God, yet spurns His pure Word for theories and doctrines which emanate from man. "The wine "signifies that which false Babylon offers in place of the sparkling water of life. (Revelation 22:17.) Wine is undoubtedly more palatable than water-like manmade theories compared with the simple yet often disturbing truths of the Bible-but its effect deadens the senses, and gives a false sense of security. Hence the urgent plea of Revelation 18:4: "Come out of her, My people, that You be not partakers of her sins, and that You receive not of her plagues."(See also 2 Corinthians 6:17.)

The third phase of God's final message is a solemn warning against worshipping the beast and his image or receiving "his mark." Revelation 14:9. Failure to heed this warning will lead to the annihilating fires of God's wrath. (Verses 10, 11.) Such a warning calls for an explanation. So fearful is its import that we need have no doubt that a merciful God will provide ample means of identifying these symbols. Were it otherwise, the victims of this dire judgment would rightly accuse God of unfairness.

Just what is this “beast “which seems to have opposed God and menaced His people down the ages, and which puts forth its final terrible efforts against the purpose of God in these last days?

The symbol requires a consideration of parallel prophecies for identification. In Revelation 13: 1-8 it is portrayed as a seven-headed monster, each of which heads signifies a dominating human power through whom the dragon [Satan, verse 4] wields his nefarious influence upon the earth. This leads to the conclusion that the beast is successively a type of those great powers which throughout history have, in their turn, usurped the power of God in human affairs.

Verse three focuses on one particular head which was “wounded to death,” but whose “deadly wound was healed.” Verses twelve and fourteen likewise focus on this phase of the beast’s activities, where the world is wrongly urged “to worship the first beast, whose deadly wound was healed; “and “which had the wound by the sword, and did live.”

Clearly here is a religious power brought to view, for it is one which demands worship. But it is a false religion for “the dragon,” or Satan, is its support and guide.

(Verse 2.) It is a religious power which at one time receives a blow heavy enough to prove fatal, yet from which it recovers so fully that “the world wondered after the beast.” Verse 3. This mighty religious power is, therefore, no nonentity. Its fame and prestige are world-wide.

Further characteristics are mentioned in verses; five to seven. He has “a mouth speaking great things and blasphemies.” He enjoys a period of complete dominion lasting “forty and two months,” or 1,260 literal years (42 months of thirty days equal 1,260 days. See also Revelation 12:6: 11 a thousand two hundred and threescore days) and he uses his power “to make war with the saints, and to overcome them.”

There is but one universal religious power which answers to these, and the many other characteristics recorded elsewhere in the Bible—the church of Rome. Its period of domination extended for 1,260 years as the prophecy indicated, from AD 538, when the last of the Arian kingdoms resisting the arrogant claims and demands of Rome was uprooted through the efforts of Justinian, to 1798 when the “deadly wound” was inflicted by order of Napoleon Bonaparte. Pope Pius VI was arrested in February by the French General Berthier and taken to France where he died in exile.

Throughout its period of supremacy the papal power strove to exterminate all heretics. Heresy, according to the Roman Catholic interpretation, is “deciding for oneself what one shall believe and practice.” (New Catholic Dictionary, Article Heresy, page 440.) Those who preferred to follow the Bible as their rule of faith and conduct, rather than papal decrees and traditions, were, throughout this long period of domination, bitterly persecuted. According to Dr. J. Dowling, “more than fifty millions of the human family have hem slaughtered for the crime of heresy by popish persecutors.” History of Romanism, page 541.

This sad record is reluctantly acknowledged even by Catholic writers. Professor Alfred Baudrillart, later a cardinal, commenting on the church’s war against Protestants, wrote: “Indeed, even among our friends and our brothers we find those who dare not look this problem in the face. They ask permission from the church to ignore or even deny all those acts and institutions in the past which have made orthodoxy compulsory.”(The Catholic Church, The Renaissance, and Protestantism, page 184.) Andrew Stainmetz writes: “Catholics easily account for their devotion to the Holy See, in spite of its historical abominations, which, however, only few of them are aware of their accredited histories in common use, ‘with permission of authority,’ veiling the subject with painful dexterity.”-History of the Jesuits, Vol. 1, page 13.

Fulfilling the further prophetic detail, “He opened his mouth in blasphemy against God “(Revelation 13:6) is such papal claims as the following: “The Pope is of so great dignity and so exalted that he is not a mere man, but as it were God, and the vicar of God. The Pope is as it were God on earth.” -Prompta Bibliothera Canonica Juridica Moralis Theologica, Ferraris.

Today the “deadly wound” of 1798 is virtually healed. Catholicism is no longer regarded as dead or moribund. It is looked upon rather as the only likely champion of Christendom in this modern age.

Against this power, the church of God is to raise the solemn warning of Revelation 14:9. Catholicism is undoubtedly “the beast,” and its many sincere worshippers are admonished to “come out,” while others are urged to place no confidence in this power which can only lead to eventual disaster. “The mark of the beast “we shall consider a little later.

This three-fold, final message of God is, however, primarily one of love. It emanates from Him who “is long suffering ... not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance.” 2 Peter 3:9. “The saints” who proclaim this message of God have two outstanding marks. They are described by John as they that keep the commandments of God, and the faith of Jesus.” Revelation 14:12.

Is the Final judgment a Myth?

THE final judgment is a certainty. Says Paul He hath appointed a day, in the which He will judge the world in righteousness by that Man whom He hath ordained; whereof He hath given assurance unto all men, in that He hath raised Him from the dead. Acts 17:31. As we have seen, the judgment forms one of the special features of God's, last message to the world before Christ comes. The wise man says: "God shall bring every work into judgment, with every secret thing, whether it be good or whether it be evil." Ecclesiastes 12:14. Here is no myth, but a somber yet reassuring fact. God views us not with frigid unconcern, nor is His interest in us merely general. He will consider and judge each one according to the most intimate and even insignificant details of our lives.

Solomon says: "Rejoice, O young man, in thy youth; ... and walk in the ways of your heart, and in the sight of your eyes: but know thou, that for all these things God will bring thee into judgment." Ecclesiastes 11:9. The judgment is sure.

Man has always been prone to doubt the judgment, even as the unfaithful shepherds of Malachi's day, who said: "Every man that does evil is good in the sight of the Lord. Where is the God of judgment?" Malachi 2:17. It was soothingly thought and taught that our petty sins and selfish ways" and even the gross sins too-will not be taken into account. Thus it is today. Indeed, no idea could be more far-fetched than that of judgment, if evolutionary teachings are true. Thus we have men like E. M. Forster, declaring: "My temple stands not upon Mount Moriah but in the Elysian Fields where even the immoral are admitted."-I Believe, page 95.

Such ideas are dangerous in that they weaken the urge to live uprightly. If there were no judgment, and if eternal progress-or eternal oblivion-were the automatic lot of everyone, regardless of moral status, then sacrifices and self-denial for the sake of truth and nobility would be quite irrelevant.

But Jesus taught much concerning the judgment (e.g., Matthew 12:36). And the apostle Paul declared: "We must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ." 2 Corinthians 5:10.

Cleansed by the blood of Jesus, and clothed with His righteousness, we have nothing to fear but everything to give us joy, as we face the prospect of having our persona) records submitted for the scrutiny of that heavenly tribunal.

How Will God Judge Us?

GOD will judge us by His holy law, the Ten Commandments. (Exodus 20:3-17.) "So speak You, and so do, as they that shall be judged by the law of liberty," advises James. (James 2:12) In the preceding verse he quotes from this "law of liberty": "For He that said, Do not commit adultery, said also, Do not kill." Verse 11. Clearly, this law is the Ten Commandment law.

It is rightly termed the "law of liberty" "because freedom from guilt, from fear, from shame, from social ostracism, from eternal death, can only be enjoyed by those who are law-abiding. As the famous magistrate Basil L. Q. Henriques, C.B.E., M.A., JR, concludes in his book, *The Indiscretions of a Magistrate*:" Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter: Fear God, and keep His commandments: for this is the whole duty of man. Thus must children be brought up to be bound by the yoke of the immutable, eternal Law which God has revealed to man, and which man has persisted in ignoring throughout the ages. There is no freedom except through the Law,' said the rabbis with truly inspired insight.

For ever thus the trend of progress flows! Unfettered, lawless spirits strive in vain Perfection's crystal summits to attain. Who would be great must his own ruler be; And law alone it is that makes us free."

When Will the Judgment Begin?

WE know that the judgment will begin before the great day of the Lord, because by that time the irrevocable decision for weal or woe will have been passed on everyone. When Christ returns, He will bring His reward with Him. (Revelation 22:12.) The judgment, therefore, precedes the advent. We know also, that though the end of the judgment period cannot be determined, its beginning can. Otherwise it would be quite impossible for the message of Revelation 14:7, which declares: "The hour of His judgment is come" "to be given with any degree of certainty.

Consideration has already been given to the remarkable prophecy in Daniel which enables us definitely to answer our question, a question which could more appropriately read: When did the judgment begin?

It began at the dose of the Bible's longest prophetic time period, which stretches for 2,300 years from 457 BC, when Artaxerxes decreed that Jerusalem be restored, to the vital date Of AD 1844. Thus for well over one hundred years the message of the present judgment session in heaven has been given.

When that session finally doses, those who have heeded the merciful warnings and admonitions of God's final message (Revelation 14:6-11) will rejoice in the fulfillment of His promise: "Fear not, little flock; for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom." Luke 12:32.

What Is the "Mark of the Beast"

WARNING against the "mark of the beast is a vital part of God's last message for the world; and such is the nature of the punishment which befalls those who "receive his mark"(Revelation 14: 9) that it ill becomes us to shelve this matter as unimportant. This "mark "is dearly not a thing of insignificance. It is something just as universal as the church from which it emerges and is well able to touch the life of everyone. Having identified "the beast - as the papal church, we leave it to that church to indicate what the mark really is.

As "evidence "of her divine mission and authority, the papal church has consistently pointed to her success in "changing - the fourth commandment of God. This, she claims, is the great proof of her spiritual power, the greatest mark of her calling as the world's religious dictator.

God commands "the seventh day "to be kept holy as the Sabbath. (Exodus 20:8-11.) The papal church, however, decrees that the first day be observed as the weekly rest day. Here is her own claim: "The Catholic Church for over one thousand years before the existence of a Protestant, by virtue of her divine mission changed the day from Saturday to Sunday." - The Christian Sabbath, page 29.

And from The Convert's Catechism of Christian Doctrine, by Revelation Peter Geiermann, C.S.S.R., we have the following:

"Question. Which is the Sabbath day?

"Answer. Saturday is the Sabbath day.

"Question. Why do we observe Sunday instead of Saturday?

"Answer. We observe Sunday instead of Saturday because the Catholic Church in the council of Laodicea (AD 336), transferred the solemnity from Saturday to Sunday....

"The Church substituted Sunday for Saturday by the plenitude of that divine power which Jesus Christ bestowed upon her." - Page50.

Heaven's approval is confidently assumed for this tampering with God's holy law, for inasmuch as the pope claims to be Christ's vicegerent, "the sentences which he gives are to be forthwith ratified in heaven."-Catholic Encyclopedia, Volume 12, page 265.

In a letter of November, 1895, the chancellor of Cardinal Gibbons stated: "Of course the Catholic Church claims that the change was her act. It could not have been otherwise, as none in those days would have dreamed of doing anything in matters spiritual and ecclesiastical and religious without her. And the act is a mark of her ecclesiastical power and authority in religious matters." (Signed) "H. F. Thomas, Chancellor for the Cardinal."

Of course, no-one who is unaware of the true facts will be regarded by God as having "the mark of the beast." A just God overlooks wrongs which are done ignorantly. (Acts 17:30.) But when the light comes, it is a moral duty" and privilege-to follow it. For "to him that knows to do good, and does it not, to him it is sin." James 4:17

Which Is the "Lord's Day"?

ONE day in seven is "the Lord's day." Upon this day the apostle John, in lonely exile on the Isle of Patmos, had those remarkable visions recorded in the book of Revelation. (Revelation 1:10.) But precisely what day was this?

Almost every day of the week is held in high esteem by one or other of the various religious faiths; and according to his religion, so will a man contend for the divine dignity of the day which he esteems. The Bible, however, leaves us in no doubt as to the true "Lord's day." In the one and only statement which clearly designates this day, Jesus said: "The Son of man is Lord also of the Sabbath." Mark 2:28. The Sabbath, then, is "the Lord's day."

Jesus did not say: "The Son of man is Lord of the first day of the week," as a great many sincere people seem to assume. Nor did He declare the sixth day to be "the Lord's day," as Muslims prefer to believe. The day regarded by our divine Master as His special day is the Sabbath. The Lord's testimony through Isaiah leaves no doubt whatever. "If you refrain from doing your own business upon The Sabbath, on My sacred day, and hold the Sabbath a delight, and the Eternal God's sacred day an honor, not following your own

wanted round, not doing business, and not talking idly, then you shall have delight in the Eternal God's favor." Isaiah 58:13,14 (Moffatt).

To discover the identity of the Bible Sabbath we turn to the fourth commandment which states: "Remember the Sabbath day to keep it holy. Six days shall thou labor, and do all thy work: But the seventh day is the Sabbath of the Lord thy God: in it thou shall not do any work." Exodus 20:8-10. Our answer is now complete. "The Lord's day," according to Jesus, is the Sabbath; the Sabbath, according to God's eternal law, is "the seventh day" of the week; and the seventh day of the week is what we now know as Saturday.

The reason why we should remember to keep holy the seventh day is given thus by God: "For in six days the Lord made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that in them is, and rested the seventh day: wherefore the Lord blessed the Sabbath day, and hallowed it." Exodus 20:11. Thus, among its many benevolent purposes, the Sabbath, or Lord's day, is designed as a weekly reminder of the creation of this world—a reminder, be it noted, of the omnipotent power of our Lord and Savior Himself, for "the world was made by Him." John 1:10.

Modern evolution would obliterate from men's minds the truth of the great creation story. It would banish God from His universe, and forever rob Him of the credit for having performed so marvelous a creative act. Well might the evolutionist be asked: "Who is this that darkened counsel by words without knowledge? Gird up now thy loins like a man; for I will demand of thee, and answer thou Me. Where was thou when I laid the foundations of the earth? Declare, if thou has understanding. Knows thou it, because thou was then born? Or because the number of thy days is great?" Job 38:21,22. Such searching questions serve to emphasize how finite and limited is even the most intellectual among us. Yet the subversive modern theories are destined to be taught with increasing emphasis as time progresses. (2 Peter 3:3-5.)

No wonder God's final ultimatum, at its very outset, gives due emphasis to the fact that He is the Creator. (Revelation 14:7.) And no wonder that the remnant church will uplift the true Sabbath of God as the weekly memorial of His creation. This is doubly needful in view of the spurious Sabbath instituted by "the beast," and which constitutes the unique "mark" of his assumed authority.

Is the Sabbath Necessary?

GOD'S law was given to show us how to live nobly, peaceably, and joyfully. Each one of its precepts is essential for the perfection of the whole. Omit any one, and the law becomes deficient. Omit the Sabbath commandment, and we are robbed of one of the most effective means of bringing the blessing and spiritual nourishment we so much need today.

Quite apart from any blessing it involves, however, the Sabbath is necessary because God has hallowed it, ordained it, and commanded that it be remembered. When God commands, He recognizes no human right to decide whether or not that command is essential or irrelevant.

Of course, He forces no one to obey; but inasmuch as He alone is the source of life and blessing, He reminds us that disobedience must sever us from that source. Failure to obey any of God's commands, provided a person is conscious of that failure, can only lead to spiritual bankruptcy and death. The wise man records for us the somber assurance that "he that turns away his ear from hearing the law, even his prayer shall be abomination." Proverbs 28:9. And those who "set at naught" God's counsel, who "cast away the law of the Lord of hosts," or who despise "the word of the Holy One of Israel," are duly warned in such passages as Proverbs 1:24-32 and Isaiah 5:24. "But who so hearkens unto Me," says the Lord, "shall dwell safely, and shall be quiet from fear of evil." Proverbs 1:33. It is very evident then, that the Sabbath is essential for our mental and spiritual happiness.

The Sabbath commandment is the only one of the ten which provides us with the time we need for prayer and meditation, for Bible study and public worship. As Jesus said: "The Sabbath was made for man, and not man for the Sabbath." Mark 2:27. It was made not for any exclusive group, such as is erroneously assumed by those who call it "Jewish," but for all mankind—just as were the other nine of the Ten Commandments. For all men are in need of the benefits it provides. The Sabbath was ordained as a means of spiritual refreshing after the secular toil of the previous six working days.

If there were no Sabbath, every day would be a working day, and our minds would soon be fully absorbed with secular things. For this reason, the Sabbath commandment of all the ten is pre-eminently suited to maintain and strengthen that close relationship with God which makes possible the work of sanctification in our lives. Hence the Lord says: "I gave them My Sabbaths, to be a sign between Me and them, that they might know that I am the Lord that sanctify them." Ezekiel 20:12.

Quite apart from our spiritual needs are those of our mind and body. We need one rest day in seven for the preservation of mental and physical health. Genuine Sabbath-keepers always find that Sabbath observance, far from hampering their chances of success in their daily work, is a wonderful stimulus. It provides the needed rest and relaxation for them to return with renewed zest and drive to the secular tasks.

Some years ago, a certain Dr. Farre testified before a committee of the House of Commons that men working six days each week will enjoy better health and longer life “other things being equal-than those working seven days a week. He further claimed that such men would actually do more work and do it more efficiently. An association of physicians voted unanimously in support of Dr. Farre’s contention.

Nervous diseases such as neurasthenia abound today. In fact, of all diseases, they are characteristic of this modern age. And they are on the increase. Never in all history have nerve forces been so squandered by over-work, fear, anxiety, and other destructive emotions. Such conditions were unknown in earlier ages. Now the Sabbath is admirably suited to restore health and tranquillity to jaded nerves, and vigor to tired bodies. Sabbath observance prevents us from overworking, and thus from squandering the life forces which are to be conserved and used for God’s glory. Sabbath worship will likewise more than neutralize and dissipate such destructive emotions as fear and anxiety. It will keep us mentally sane, physically sound, and spiritually keen.

“The Sabbath,” wrote Dr. Blakie, “is God’s special present to the working man; and one of its chief objects is to prolong life, and preserve efficient his working tone. In the vital system, it acts like a compensation-pond: it replenishes the spirits, the elasticity, and vigor, which the last six days have drained away, and supplies the force which is to fill the six days succeeding; and, in the economy of existence, it answers the same purpose as, in the economy of income, is answered by a savings bank.”

In view of the times, it is surely true to say that never in all history was the Sabbath more necessary than it is today. It is a golden link which binds men to God.

“A world without a Sabbath,” claimed H. W. Beecher “would be like a man without a smile, like a summer without flowers, and like a homestead without a garden. It is the joyous day of the whole week.”

In considering the need for obeying the Sabbath commandment, James’ statement should be borne in mind: “Whosoever shall keep the whole law, and yet offend in one point, he is guilty of all.” James 2:10. D. L. Moody’s comment on this is interesting: “The Ten Commandments are not ten different laws; they are one law. If I am being held up in the air by a chain of ten links, and I break one of them, down I come, just as surely as if I break the whole ten.” - Weighed and Wanting, page 119.

If the Sabbath was necessary in the Garden of Eden before sin came (Genesis 2:2, 3), and if the Sabbath is necessary hereafter when all the saints shall gather for worship before God’s glorious throne (Isaiah 66:23), then the Sabbath is essential today for us who are struggling against evil in this vale of sin. Besides, when we really love the Lord Jesus, having come to a realization of all He has done for us, we will revel in this weekly opportunity of having full and unhindered communion with Him and fellowship with other Christians. We will be among those who “call the Sabbath a delight.” Isaiah 58:13.

Has the Sabbath Been Changed?

SINCE its institution at the very beginning, the Sabbath has come to man with unfailing regularity. And thus will it continue for all eternity. The law of which the Sabbath is a central part is frequently described in the Bible as eternal. David said: “All Thy commandments are righteousness; “and commenting on this righteousness, he adds: “Thy righteousness is an everlasting righteousness, and Thy law is the truth.” Psalm 119:172, 142.

It is held by some that Jesus came to abolish the law, or at least, to change it. The prophet’s testimony, however, suggests otherwise: “The Lord ... will magnify the law, and make it honorable,” says Isaiah. (Isaiah 42:21.) There is a vast difference between magnifying a thing and abolishing or even modifying it. Jesus’ own testimony was: “Think not that I am come to destroy the law, or the prophets: I am not come to destroy, but to fulfil. For verily I say unto you. Till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law, till all be fulfilled.” Matthew 5:17,18.

By His preaching and practice Jesus always maintained and recognized the benevolent claims of the holy Sabbath. Far from changing the day, or abolishing it altogether, Jesus strove to show men how to keep it and to derive from it the fullness of God’s blessing. In His day, the Sabbath had become an intolerable burden and a day of misery for most of the people, due to the fantastic rabbinical teachings. Before the Babylonian captivity the Jews were notably lax in the matter of Sabbath observance; but after the return they swung from an extreme of slackness to an extreme of mortifying rigidity. The Jewish doctors strove to make the Sabbath a barrier between the world at large and God’s chosen people. Sabbath prohibitions multiplied, and each irksome-and often senseless-rule gave rise to new subtleties. So crushing a load of legal rubbish was heaped upon the Sabbath commandment that its benevolent purpose was well-nigh forgotten. For instance, let a man be caught spending the moments of the Sabbath chasing some troublesome household pest, and he was at once condemned as a Sabbath breaker. He was, as the rabbis saw it, engaged in the secular pursuit of hunting. Or let any one do so innocent a thing as pluck a few ears of corn when out for a Sabbath walk, and he was considered guilty of defiling the sacred hours by harvesting. (Matthew 12:1, 2.)

It was to dispel such legal rubbish and magnify the real Sabbath that Jesus preached and acted as He did. His great concern in the many conflicts He had with the Jewish teachers was to transform that cold and deadly rabbinical Sabbath to the life-giving season of joy and fellowship God intended His holy day to be.

There is no word, no hint, in all Christ's teachings that this day of rest would ever be changed or abandoned. The very opposite is true. Looking forward with prophetic foresight to the impending destruction of Jerusalem by the armies of Titus, and the escape of His followers from the doomed city, He warned them: "But pray You that your flight be not in the winter, neither on the Sabbath day." Matthew 24:20. Jerusalem was destroyed in AD 70. Thus it was Christ's expectation that His followers would be enjoying the benefits of the Sabbath long after He had ascended into heaven. (AD 31.)

Likewise the apostles give no hint of any change of the Sabbath. Rather, it was their practice to preach and worship on that day. (Acts 13:44; 18:4; etc.) Paul knew of no such change. Toward the close of his ministry, as a prisoner in Rome, he testified before the Jewish elders of that city: "Men and brethren, though I have committed nothing against the people, or customs of our fathers, yet was I delivered prisoner from Jerusalem into the hands of the Romans." Acts 28:17. How unthinkable and untrue such a testimony would be, if Paul, together with the other apostolic teachers, had observed and recommended the first day of the week as the Lord's day instead of the seventh-day Sabbath. Realizing with what zeal the Jews clung to their Sabbath, it is easy for us to imagine how vehement would have been the uproar had Paul desecrated, disregarded, or preached against, that holy day. But in all things his preaching and practice harmonized with the "customs of our fathers."

The change of the day, therefore, has taken place since Bible days for such reasons as that of popularizing Christianity among Sunday-keeping pagans, and of dispelling the popular opinion held by the Gentiles that Christianity was merely another Jewish sect.

Of course, however men may seek to modify the law makes no difference whatever to that moral standard recorded in heaven, and by which we will be judged. All ten of those righteous precepts will "stand fast forever and ever."

The question is sometimes asked: "Can we be sure that the Sabbath of today is the identical day ordained at the beginning? Is it not very likely that the sequence of days has been interfered with during the passage of time?" Fortunately we can be sure of our answer. The weekly Sabbath, and the weekly cycle, have never been lost. God's people had a reminder from God Himself when He provided manna in the wilderness. Abundant supplies fell on six days of each week; but on the seventh day there was none- (Exodus 16:27) This provision continued for forty years. When Jesus came, He recognized the sanctity of the day which the Jews observed as the Sabbath. Thus by His preaching and practice He set His seal on the fact that the identical Sabbath day was still preserved. And since the time of Christ, the week has continued with regular and recorded sequence until today. Even the calendar changes of 1582 and 1752 when, in the process of changing from the Julian to the Gregorian calendar, several dates were dropped, the actual sequence of days was undisturbed. Instead of Thursday, October 4th, 1582, being followed by Friday, October 5th, it was followed by Friday, October 15th. The weekly cycle thus remained and the true Sabbath was preserved.

How wonderful a place this old world would surely be if everybody ceased from all but the essential duties on the Sabbath. God would speedily be restored to His rightful place. Wars would forthwith become unthinkable. We would have a veritable heaven on earth.

This weekly day of rest and spiritual refreshing was given to man at the very beginning of human history, before man fell. (Genesis 2:2, 3.) It was as if the Lord anticipated the rise of teachings and theories that would deny His wonderful creative acts; and He therefore ordained His weekly rest day as the great reminder that He is, indeed, the One who made all things by the word of His power.

It is as true today as ever it was that: "Blessed is the man that keeps the Sabbath from polluting it, and keeps his hand from doing any evil." Isaiah 56:2. Such a man is blessed because his sense of God's presence and power is deepened week by week. His mind and spirit recover from the disturbing and worrying influence of the humdrum routine of workaday life. Taking time to think upon loftier things enables him to put everything in its right perspective. Not least is the physical blessing which brings new life and refreshing to tired muscles and jaded nerves.

As true today as ever it was is the ancient assurance of God's favor to those who fulfil the particular condition. Millions are proving it so. Says God through the inspired prophet: "If you refrain from doing your own business upon the Sabbath, on My sacred day, and hold the Sabbath a delight, and the Eternal God's sacred day an honor, not following your Own wonted round, not doing business, not talking idly, then you shall have delight in the Eternal God's favor." Isaiah 58:13, 14 (Moffatt).

How wonderful to have the special favor of God! Such would assure not merely success in secular undertakings, but success in our preparation for the life to come. Sad indeed, is the modern tendency not only to rob God of the credit for creating all things, but to forget and sometimes even to deny-Him entirely.

Hence, as the prophet described, is the clarion call to be sounded in the last days by the remnant church: "Fear God, and give glory to Him; and worship Him that made heaven, and earth, and the sea, and the fountains of waters." Revelation 14:7. What is this but a call to Sabbath observance. A call to remember God, not alone as Savior and Redeemer, but as the omnipotent Creator? Special emphasis to this merciful call is needed in a world where false theories are receiving such widespread acceptance.

No one need fear to respond to the great God. There is no single instance on record that He has ever broken the following promise: "Them that honor Me I will honor." 1 Samuel 2:30. Wonderful it surely is, especially in such a world of unrest as we find ourselves today, to know that God has a special interest in our personal welfare; and to know that all His resources, infinite in power and limitless in quantity, are at our disposal.

QUESTIONS ABOUT WORLD PROBLEMS

Can Civilization Survive?

IT is good to know that God has given the answer to this question in His Word, an answer which is both satisfying and reassuring. But first let us see what man says. The birth of the atomic bomb came as a withering blow to men's expectations, and to a large extent, hope has given place to a fathomless despair. "The advent of a new weapon," writes Mgr. Ronald Knox in *God and the Atom*, "destructive on a scale hitherto unknown, seems to alter the whole perspective of historical probabilities; men who till yesterday were boldly prophesying a golden age are now wistfully hoping for it." (Page 16) But like a will-d-the-wisp, hopes of a satisfactory settled order are receding.

The newest weapons which science is able to put into men's hands are unimaginably horrible. Dr. Harrison Brown of the University of Chicago, commenting on the possibilities of the hydrogen weapon, said: "It has been insinuated by several persons, none of them scientists, that in stating that life on earth can be wiped out, we are exaggerating. ... I want to impress upon you the fact that we are not exaggerating. We are deadly serious." (Now York Times, March 20, 1950.) Dr. Robert F. Bacher, formerly a member of the Atomic Energy Commission, claimed that one super bomb would be sufficiently powerful to wipe out completely any large city in the world. Dr. Bacher, as recorded in the *Scientific American*, describes the hydrogen weapon which could be used in any future war as having "an explosive effect equivalent to about 20,000,000 tons of TNT."

Such are the prospects. In the opinion of eminent scientists, a hydrogen-radiation war may well extinguish life from this planet. Some time ago Dr. Albert Einstein wrote in the *Sunday Express*: "If there were another war to-morrow, with the development of military technique and the terrible force of new arms resulting from these discoveries, the ravages it would bring would be such that towns, peoples, and nations would be crushed forever.

"And if politics as we see them go on their way without control, without the strongest reaction from people individually and in the mass, without solemn protest from scientists, then the most atrocious war will be inevitable." The somber truth is that with the passage of time the world's political situation gets worse.

All men desire peace, and most of them share the conviction that war would mean irreparable ruin, yet somehow they seem to be at the mercy of forces over which they have no control. The trouble is that they want peace on their own particular terms, and the very gravity of the world situation tends to make them more insistent in their demands.

We turn from the gloomy anticipations of men to God's Word. "The way of an is not in himself: it is not in man that walks to direct his steps." Jeremiah 10:23. From this one statement alone it is dear that unless men look to God for guidance and help, civilization as we now know it will fail. It cannot do otherwise if men fail to walk in God's way and to seek wisdom from Him. Now as never before is being fulfilled the ancient declaration: "The wisdom of their wise men shall perish, and the understanding of their prudent men shall be hid." Isaiah 29:14.

Such is the topsy-turvy world we live in that godly wisdom is regarded as foolishness. The very thing that could bring healing to humanity's putrefying sores is generally regarded as unworkable and undesirable. More and more are men inclined to "call evil good, and good evil." They "put darkness for light, and light for darkness." Isaiah 5:20. Jesus Christ alone has the solution to earth's troubles, but the general picture is one of increasing reluctance to come to Him. Christ's sorrowful complaint still is: "You will not come to Me, that You might have life." John 5:40. Therefore He thus describes the picture of this old world's last days: "Men swooning with panic and foreboding of what is to befall the universe." Luke 21:26 (Moffatt).

Of course, the optimistic and heroic-planners are hard at work. The basic trouble, however, is not with the plans but with men and women. For plans depend on men rather than men on plans. An engineer's plans may be flawless, but if his bridge is built of rotten timber instead of sturdy steel, the bridge will collapse. Men are like that rotten timber. The best of plans is doomed to fail unless the human material is perfected.

Now only God can change the human heart. Only He can transform the rotten timber to stainless steel. We cannot perfect ourselves no matter how diligently we try. "Can the Ethiopian change his skin, or the leopard his spots? then may You also do good that are accustomed to do evil." Jeremiah 13:23. Actually the global picture does not suggest any widespread attempt on man's part at moral improvement. Hence we come again to the Bible's portrayal of the last days, which visualizes a condition where - evil men and seducers shall wax worse and worse, deceiving, and being deceived." 2 Timothy 3:13. "In the last days perilous times shall come. For men shall be lovers of their own selves, covetous, boasters, proud, blasphemers, without natural affection, trace breakers, false accusers, incontinent, fierce, traitors, lovers of pleasure more than lovers of God." 2 Timothy 3:14.

Finally we have the Lord's declaration: "As the days of Noah were, so shall also the coming of the Son of man be. For as in the days that were before the flood they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day that Noah entered into the ark, and knew not until the flood came, and took them all away. So shall also the coming of the Son of man be." Matthew 24:37-39. That antediluvian civilization of Noah's day failed to survive because of their refusal to turn to God. In like manner, says Jesus, will our last day civilization fail to survive. The Lord Himself draws the striking parallel.

Happily, however, God's picture is not one of unmitigated gloom. His prophetic Word envisions the most glorious prospects for those who, like Noah and his family, turn with all their hearts to the Lord. Through all the troubles of the last days, we are assured that "the Lord will be the hope of His people." Joel 3:16.

Will the Nations Ever Unite?

GOD'S answer to this question was given 2,500 years ago through Daniel the prophet. Speaking of the nations of today, Daniel was inspired to declare: "They shall not cleave one to another!" Daniel 2:43. Against this prophetic word of the Lord, kings, presidents, dictators, and political leaders have striven in vain. Such men as Charlemagne, Charles V of Spain, Louis XIV-the "Grand Monarque" of France, and Napoleon Bonaparte, all sought to restore the European unity that was Rome's. In defining the aim of his Imperial policy, Napoleon said: "I must have a European code, a European Court of Cassation, a common coinage, common weights and measures, and common laws. I have to make of all the peoples of Europe one single people, and of Paris the capital of the world." (Quoted in From Napoleon to Stalin, page 27) This great general's plans failed. Bible prophecy had thus decreed it.

Perhaps the Bible's most striking prophecy is that recorded in Daniel chapter two, for it covers in its broad sweep the whole of political history to the end of time. King Nebuchadnezzar (605-562 BC), Babylon's greatest monarch, had a dream. In his dream he saw a great image whose head was of gold, his breast of silver, his loins of brass, his legs of iron, and his feet of iron and clay mixed. (Daniel 2:31-33.) Daniel the prophet, after much prayer, explained the meaning of the dream to the king. (Daniel 2:36-40.) He told the king that it was a revelation from God, who was thus revealing what shall be in the latter days! Daniel 2:28.

The golden head was a symbol of the Babylonian empire, which dominated the world at that time. Nebuchadnezzar fondly hoped that his kingdom would continue forever as the world's dominant power, but Daniel said this was not to be.

The breast and arms of silver represented the second world empire, that of MedoPersia. Under Cyrus, the great city of Babylon fell in 538 BC, and Babylonian power completely collapsed, never to rise again. As silver is inferior to gold, so was the magnificence of Persia inferior to that of her predecessor. Her military power, however, was stronger.

But, said Daniel, the world would not forever be dominated by Persia. The image's loins of brass symbolized a third world power. This power was Greece. Led by Alexander the Great the Greek army overthrew Darius and his Persians at the battle of Arbela in 331 BC; Greece had a meteoric rise to power; but like the powers before her, Greece was to be superseded.

The image's legs of iron were symbolic of the fourth world empire-the iron monarchy of Rome. Power passed from Greece to Rome at the battle of Pydna in Macedonia, 168 BC Said Daniel: "The fourth kingdom shall be strong as iron: forasmuch as iron breaks in pieces and subdues all things." Verse 40. History proved it to be even so. For centuries, no power could resist Rome. It broke in pieces the Greek empire, and well nigh destroyed the Jewish nation (AD 70).

After Rome,, the next phase, according to the prophet was not the rise of a fifth world monarchy, which would be the normal thing to expect, but division. It was symbolized by the image's feet and toes, part of potter's clay, and part of iron." Verse 41. Rome's power was sapped by moral decline, and under the impact of the barbarian invasions of the fourth and fifth centuries, the mighty empire faded out. In her place rose ten independent nations, portrayed also by the ten horns of the fourth beast in Daniel 7:7, 24. These were the Ostrogoths, Visigoths, Franks, Alamanni, Lombards, Heruli, Burgundians, Suevi, Vandals, and Anglo Saxons.

This condition of disunity was represented by the iron and clay of the image's feet, and just as these two materials will not cohere, so the disunited nations shall not cleave one to another." Verse 43. Thus did God, through His prophet, foresee it and describe it, and the

prophetic word has never been broken. As the Oxford historian, A. J. P. Taylor, remarks: "How has the continent of Europe escaped political unification? Everything in Europe seems to call for it; everything, that is, except the temperament and traditions of its peoples." (From Napoleon to Stalin, page 24) Whatever the reason, Bible prophecy foresaw that unity would never again be achieved by man. "For a thousand years men have dreamed of European union; yet for a thousand years this most uniform of continents has defied political unification. The most recent attempt at it [Hitler's] we have just lived through and successfully opposed."-Ibid., page 24.

Any future attempts will just as surely fail, until that mighty event takes place which concludes the remarkable prediction of Daniel chapter two. Ibis event is of global importance. It will be by far the most stupendous happening of the ages, completely dwarfing all else which world history records. But we will consider this a little later.

In view of such prophecies as we have here briefly surveyed, no doubts regarding the Bible's divine origin can be reasonably retained. In his response to it all King Nebuchadnezzar was constrained to say: "Of a truth it is, that your God is a God of gods, and a Lord of kings, and a revealer of secrets." Daniel 2:47. Wise are we if we place our full trust and confidence in Him.

Does God Control the Nations?

THIS divine "revealer of secrets" "is in full control over the nations of this world. In days like these, no fact is more reassuring than that the great God of heaven is overruling in human affairs. At no time has God withdrawn His influence from men. None, not even the darkest heathen or the most hardened atheist, is immune from God's sovereign power.

In God's "hand is the soul of every living thing.... With Him is strength and wisdom: the deceived and the deceiver are His. He leads counselors away spoiled, and makes the judges fools. He looses the bond of kings, and girds their loins with a girdle. He leads princes away spoiled, and overthrows the mighty. He increases the nations, and destroys them: He enlarged the nations, and straightens them again." Job 12:10, 16-19,23.

But is not the rise of such callous and powerful tyrants as Nero, or Attila, or a great many others which perhaps more readily come to our minds, an indication that God has left men and nations generally to their own devices? Happily, this is not so. It has ever been true, and ever will be, "that the most High rules in the kingdom of men, and gives it to whomsoever He will, and sets up over it the basest of men." Daniel 4:17. Indeed, as Jeremiah asked: "Who is he that said, and it comes to pass, when the Lord commands it not?" Lamentations 3:37.

Though the acts of evil men are never in harmony with God's will, yet are they always overruled and controlled by God to serve His ultimate purpose. And His purpose is that men may turn to the Lord Jesus, and that the faith of His followers may be tested and established. As Paul has it: "God hath made of one blood all nations of men for to dwell on all the face of the earth, and hath determined the times before appointed, and the bounds of their habitation. That they should seek the Lord, if haply they might feel after Him, and find Him." Acts 17:24-27.

"God is the King of all the earth. God reigns over the heathen: God sits upon the throne of His holiness." Psalm 47:7, 8. His controlling hand is shaping all things in preparation for the great and glorious consummation.

QUESTIONS ABOUT THE FUTURE

Will Christ Come Again?

THE greatest event of the ages will be the Second Coming of Jesus. This will be the glorious consummation of the history of the world. It will virtually bring to an end the bloodthirsty conflict between good and evil, truth and error. Before we turn to the Lord's specific answer to this question, however, let us bear in mind that without the Second Coming of Jesus His work for this world is not, nor ever can be, perfected. On His cross, Jew paid the full price for our redemption. His saving grace which was thereby made available for us is able to save us from the guilt of sin and, which is equally important, from the power of sin. (1 John 1:9.) But not until we are saved from the very presence of sin will our Lord's work be done.

His plan of salvation therefore includes a complete cleaning up of this world. For He has made our world, not to be an eternal plague spot, or the citadel of sin where Satan holds dominion, but a delectable dwelling-place where His creatures may abide in happiness and eternal security. "Thus said the Lord that created the heavens; God Himself that formed the earth and made it; He hath established it, He created it not in vain, He formed it to be inhabited." Isaiah 45:18. Unless something really colossal takes place, this plan of God will be frustrated. Such is humanity's moral decline in spite of its scientific progress, that future prospects would seem to hold little but atomic calamity which will render the world not only uninhabited, but uninhabitable. The alternative to such a doomed world, the

mighty event which will bring the long-looked-for change, is the Second Coming of Christ. This Second Coming is essential as the first great step in His marvelous plan to provide “new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwells righteousness.” 2 Peter 3:13.

Will Christ come again? How can we doubt it in view of His own promise to His discouraged disciples shortly before He ascended to heaven? He said: “Let not your heart be troubled: You believe in God, believe also in Me. In My Father’s house are many mansions: if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto Myself, that where I am, there You may be also.” John 14:1-3.

Will Christ come again? How can we doubt it in view of the promise of the angels at His ascension? To that disheartened group which stood on Olivet’s summit, straining their eyes to catch a last glimpse of their ascending Lord. The angel said This same Jesus, which is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as You have seen Him go into heaven.” Acts 1:11. Neither the promises of Jesus nor of this angel have yet been fulfilled. Sin still reigns. Morality plumbs deeper levels. Doomsday looms ever larger. Fear and perplexity have supplanted peace and security. Joy and goodness have virtually vanished. Truly the time is ripe for Christ to come.

The prophecy of Daniel chapter two declares that Christ will come. The metal image which King Nebuchadnezzar saw was finally smashed and pulverized by a stone which was hurled at its feet of iron and clay. This remarkable stone was cut from the rock “without hands,” and after destroying the image, it “became a great mountain, and filled the whole earth.” Daniel 2:34,35. This is the one phase of Daniel’s thrilling prophecy which has not yet happened. Today, we are living in the era of history symbolized by the image’s feet of iron and clay that of a disunited, quarrelling world. We await the next development, something which is indeed spectacular, and without the slightest parallel in past history—the smiting by the stone. The meaning of this is thus explained by Daniel: “In the days of these kings [the divided nations as we have them today] shall the God of heaven set up a kingdom, which shall never be destroyed. And the kingdom shall not be left to other people, but it shall break in pieces and consume all these kingdoms, and it shall stand forever.” Daniel 2:44. (See also verse 45)

The stone kingdom is Christ’s kingdom. The stone’s shattering impact on the image depicts Christ’s mighty advent in glory when worldly powers will be laid low. The reign of tyranny will cease forever.

Christ’s Second Coming is the climax of many other prophecies. Daniel, like Nebuchadnezzar was given visions of world history. His vision of chapter seven covered the same period, and the world powers—Babylon, Medo-Persia, Greece, and Rome were aptly displayed under the imagery of the lion, for strength and glory (Babylon); the bear for rapacity (Medo-Persia); the winged leopard for speed (Greece); and the nondescript monster for extreme brutality (Rome). Divided Europe, as we have had it since Rome’s decline and fall, was shown by the symbolism of the ten horns upon the head of the fourth beast. (Daniel 7:2-7,17-20, 23, 24)

Were the prophecy to end here, it would be void of hope for humanity. Happily it carries us forward to the great climax of the ages when “the kingdom and dominion, and the greatness of the kingdom under the whole heaven, shall be given to the people of the saints of the most High, whose kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, and all dominions shall serve and obey Him.” Daniel 7:27.

Christ’s Second Coming has been the hope of all ages. Enoch looked for it (Jude 14, 15), Job was comforted by it (Job 19:25), David cherished it (Psalm 102:16), Isaiah wrote of it (Isaiah 35:4; 25:9), Paul longed for it (1 Thessalonians 2:19; Hebrews 10:37). James hoped for it (James 5:8). Peter joyfully anticipated it (1 Peter 5:4; 2 Peter 1:4-6), and John’s writings all focus their prophetic beams upon it. (Revelation 6:12-17; 14:14, 15; 22:20,21) Christ’s coming is the “blessed hope “of the church (Titus 2:13), for it will not only solve all of our problems, but it will bring us face to face with “Him who loved us,” and “gave Himself for us.”

Our hearts surely thrill with new hope and joy as we realize that Christ’s Second Coming is the plan and promise of the one true “God, that cannot lie.” Titus 1:2.

How Will Christ Come?

BECAUSE of the supreme importance of Christ’s Second Coming, it is to be expected that Satan will seek to blind men’s eyes to its true nature. Almost every error we can think of has a bearing, directly or indirectly, on Jesus’ Second Advent. Such errors have one of two effects: either that of distorting or misinterpreting the facts of that great event, or that of representing it as meaningless, irrelevant, or impossible. In both cases the consequence is to unfit men and women to face the realities of that day. So we do well to acquaint ourselves with the facts.

As the prophecy of King Nebuchadnezzar’s image ably shows, Christ’s Second Coming will be overwhelming and spectacular. just as that divine stone which smote the image brought it crashing down, so will the intervention of Christ be world-shattering in its effect. (Daniel 2:44, 45) Said the Psalmist: “Our God shall come, and shall not keep silence: a fire shall devour before Him, and it shall be very tempestuous round about Him.” Psalm 50:3. “The Lord also shall roar out of Zion, and utter His voice from Jerusalem; and the heavens and the earth shall shake: but the Lord will be the hope of His people.” Joel 3:16.

Jesus described His Second Coming thus: “As the lightning comes out of the east, and shines even unto the west; so shall also the coming of the Son of man be. Then shall all the tribes of the earth mourn, and they shall see the Son of man coming in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory.” Matthew 24:27, 30.

From these descriptions it is dear that the return of Jesus will be no secret, not something witnessed by a favored few, nor an invisible thing whose spiritual nature can be realized only by enlightened believers. “Behold, He comes with clouds; and every eye shall see Him” is John’s assurance. (Revelation 1:7)

As He ascended on clouds, so will He return on clouds. (Acts 1:9-11.) As He ascended with a physical, tangible-though glorified-body (Luke 24:39), so will “this same Jesus” return, literally, bodily, visibly, audibly. But at His return, His majestic glory will be augmented by that of the angel host. “He shall come in His own glory, and in His Father’s, and of the holy angels.” Luke 9:26.

Says Paul: “For the Lord Himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the Archangel, and with the trump of God.” 1 Thessalonians 4:16. When this old world reverberates to the clarion call of that trumpet, we will know that God’s great plan of the ages is about to be consummated. It will sound the eternal death knell to sin and suffering. It will thrill the hearts of His waiting followers who know that deliverance-eternal deliverance-has come.

There is, however, a striking and somber fact about the coming of Christ. Because of general reluctance to read the signs of the times, it will come to the world as an overwhelming surprise. “Be You therefore ready also,” is Jesus’ merciful warning, “for the Son of man comes at an hour when You think not!” Luke 12:40.

“But You, brethren, are not in darkness, that that day should overtake you as a thief. You are all the children of light. Therefore let us not sleep, as do others; but let us watch and be sober.” 1 Thessalonians 5:44

What Will Happen When Christ Returns?

CHRIST’S MOST important purpose when He comes again will be to bestow appropriate rewards. Jesus said, “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.” Matthew 16:27. “And, behold, I come quickly; and My reward is with Me, to give every man according as his work shall be.” Revelation 22:12.

Some visualize this great day of the Lord as a time when the world will be converted, and when all men everywhere will humbly acknowledge the just right of Christ to rule. But the Bible portrays no such picture. Its message throughout emphasizes rather the solemn fact that “now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation.” 2 Corinthians 6:2. Those who are hoping for a future probation, or for a second chance, will be unhappily disillusioned. When Christ comes, rewards for weal or woe will already have been decided.

In God’s sight there are really only two groups of people in this world-righteous and unrighteous, saints and sinners, believers and unbelievers. Of these two, the saints are, sad to say, in the minority. Jesus said, “Enter You in at the strait gate: for wide is the gate, and broad is the way, that leads to destruction, and many there be which go in thereat. Because strait is the gate, and narrow is the way, which leads unto life, and few there be that find it.” Matthew 7:13, 14. Just two ways! The way of life, and the way of destruction. The narrow way and the broad. The uphill way of faith and obedience, and the popular way of easy self-indulgence.

These two classes are variously spoken of as the sheep and the goats, the wheat and the tares. Both classes, it is said, are to live and labor and grow together till Christ comes. Then will come separation, not universal conversion. In God’s merciful providence, tares may now be transformed into wheat, goats may become sheep, the bad may be cleansed and ennobled in order to take their place among the good. But when Christ comes, the transforming process will have ceased, and rewards will be given according to whichever class we are in. (Matthew 13:38-43;25:31-46.)

“When the Son of man shall come in His glory, and all the holy angels with Him, before Him shall be gathered all nations. And He shall separate them one from another, as a shepherd divides his sheep from the goats: and He shall set the sheep on His right hand, but the goats on the left. Then shall the King say to them on His right hand, Come, You blessed of My Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world. Then shall He say also unto them in the left hand, Depart from Me, You cursed, into everlasting fire prepared for the devil and his angels.” Matthew 25:31-34, 41.

Of course, the Lord is mindful of His sleeping saints when He returns in glory. At the sound of His trumpet they are miraculously awakened from the long sleep of death. Wherever they are, regardless of their condition, or of how scattered their remains might be, they respond at once to the Master’s clarion call. Their bodies are instantaneously remade, immortalized, and glorified, and they rise in triumph to greet their King. (1 Corinthians 15:52; 1 Thessalonians 4:16) But the rest of the dead-those who died in their sins and who therefore are unqualified for eternal life-will sleep on for a thousand years, until the second resurrection. (Revelation 20:5.)

The righteous people who are alive when Christ comes will also be changed. Their bodies will undergo a wonderful process of glorification, and they will be caught up together with the risen dead, “to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord.” 1 Thessalonians 4:17. (1 Corinthians 15:50-54) Jesus had this whole glorious scene in mind when He said to Martha of Bethany: “I am the resurrection, and the life: he that believes in Me, though he were dead, yet shall he live. [Here is the promise of the resurrection of the righteous dead.] And whosoever lives and believes in Me shall never die. [Here He promised translation from mortal life to immortal life to the saints who are living at the time of His Second Advent.] John 11:25, 26.

At Christ’s coming then, the world will be completely abandoned by the saints, for they will be taken to heaven to be with the Lord. The unrighteous dead, as we have already seen, sleep on for a thousand years; while the unrighteous living, unable to withstand the presence of Christ, will have been slain by the brightness of His glory. Paul visualized this tragic scene when he wrote: “And to you who are troubled rest with us, when the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with His mighty angels, in flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God.” 2 Thessalonians 1:7,8. (Luke 17:26-30.) Thus will the world be wholly depopulated and desolate. In this condition it will remain for the millennial period of one thousand years.

A somber scene indeed, yet one that was visualized by Isaiah and Jeremiah of old. Behold, the Lord makes the earth empty, and makes it waste. Isaiah 24:1-3. (See also Jeremiah 4:23-28.) “For thus hath the Lord said, The whole land shall be desolate; yet will I not make a full end.” Jeremiah 4:27. The “full end” of sin will be made, as we shall see in a later chapter, at the close of the thousand-year period. The day of the Lord will be a day of impressive contrasts—a day of desolation and tragedy, yet one of surpassing joy and gladness. John visualizes the multitudes who see Christ come, but who are unready. They hide themselves in terror. In anguish they pray for the rocks to fall on them. “Fall on us” they cry, “for the great day of His wrath is come; and who shall be able to stand?” Revelation 6:14-17.

From this harassing scene, we turn to that other scene which, by God’s grace, will embrace each one of us. Faithful Christians who have stood loyally for the Lord will look upward, not with anguish or fear, but with joy and gladness. They will welcome their returning King with the words: “Lo, this is our God; we have waited for Him, and He will save us.” Isaiah 25:9.

Is Christ’s Coming Near?

ON one of the many occasions when He found it necessary to rebuke the Pharisees for their hypocrisy, Jesus said: “You can discern the face of the sky; but can You not discern the signs of the times?” Matthew 16:3. Somehow they were willingly blind to the host of signs which clearly told that they were living in the time of Christ’s first advent signs which showed that Jesus was, in fact, the long-looked-for Messiah. This was unpardonable for religious leaders whose duty it was to read and expound the prophecies. Sad it is that similar reluctance to read the signs will be evident in the last days. But the signs will be there, nevertheless. In God’s providence, no time was to be more replete with signs than the “time of the end,” just before Jesus comes.

First and foremost is the fact that the many great prophecies such as that of the image of Daniel two, and the beasts of Daniel seven and eight, and the prophecies of the seven churches, the seven seals, and seven trumpets of Revelation, all show that the next major event to complete the fulfillment of their predictions, is that of Christ’s Second Coming. As Spurgeon once remarked: “Nine-tenths of these prophecies have already been accurately fulfilled; what fools we would be to disregard that remaining one-tenth which tells of the coming of Christ.” Without exception, these prophecies compel us to the wonderful conclusion that the advent is almost here.

As time gets shorter the devil’s wrath soars, and his death struggle activities reach their peak. (Revelation 12:12) The many evidences of these activities clearly tell that we are in “the last days.” At this time, says Paul, “perilous times shall come. ... Men shall be lovers of their own selves, covetous, boasters ... disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, without natural affection, trucebreakers, false accusers, incontinent, fierce, despising of those that are good, traitors, heady, high minded, lovers, of pleasures more than lovers of God. Having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof.” 2 Timothy 3:1-5. A long and woeful list! It needs no emphasis that we have reached this time of unparalleled peril; a time when men’s word cannot be depended on. When nations and individuals are falsely accused and their motives distorted when cinemas and theatres attract great queues of people who will brave all weathers, while the churches are comparatively empty; when orthodox religion is largely void of vital power. Such conditions do indeed cause concern and grief; but they nevertheless, prove that we are living in the “last days.”

Jesus added many signs to the list. He said there should be “upon the earth distress of nations, with perplexity; men’s hearts failing them for fear and for looking after those things which are coming on the earth. And then shall they see the Son of man coming in a cloud with power and great glory.” Luke 21:25-27. Thus did the Lord portray a scene of unparalleled distress such as our atomic age has ushered in. At this time, says the Lord, “Look up, and lift up your heads; for your redemption draws nigh.” Verse 28. Truly, the end is in sight.

Another outstanding sign of the “time of the end,” according to the prophet Daniel, would be the increase of knowledge and the fact that “many shall run to and fro,” an obvious reference to the vastly improved means of transport of our times. (Daniel 12:4.) This last one hundred years has seen a phenomenal advance in knowledge and applied science, compared with which all that went before was

meager indeed. We think of medical science which has increased life's expectation threefold, and which has given us such blessings as anesthetics, wonder drugs, X-rays, radium, plastic surgery, etc. We think of the cinema, radio, and television-undreamed of, one hundred years ago. We think of advance in the textile industry which has given us relatively cheaper and better clothes and such wonder materials as rayon, nylon etc. We think of industrial advance generally which has immensely raised the standard of living. Until 1600, transport in England, as elsewhere, was by horseback or waterways. Then came the development of the long-distance stage coach. 1700 brought better roads and speedier travel. By 1830 railways were coming into general use, and they virtually eclipsed road transport until 1895, when motor cars and electric road vehicles came on the scene. Finally came airplanes which can now convey us to the ends of the earth in a matter of hours. As a result of all this, the tempo, the standard, and the efficiency of life today .is such as would stagger any earlier age. Yet all is in fulfillment of prophecy, and constitutes one of the greatest signs that Christ's coming is near.

Undoubtedly this scientific advance will be largely responsible for fulfilling a more .hopeful sign of the end. Jesus said: "This Gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world for a witness unto all nations; and then shall the end come." Matthew 24:14. Modern publishing methods, radio, television, and modern transport have given to the Gospel wings which must very soon carry it to earth's remotest bounds. When all have been given the opportunity of hearing the Gospel appeal, then the end will come.

Hosts of other signs such as wars, famines, earthquakes, pestilence, the rise of organized labor etc, all tell that the devil is vehemently busy, and that the end is very, very near. (Matthew 24:7; James 5:4-8)

Mr. Spurgeon, that great soul-winner of last century, once remarked: "Our Lord may come right soon; certain signs raise our hopes very high. The love of many waxes cold, and the devil is doubly busy; and this last is no doubtful sign. When you see a farmer beginning to burn the gates and break down the hedges, and unroof the barns, And so on, you say: 'That fellow's lease is run out.' Satan has great wrath when he knows that-his time is short. In the case of the demoniac child, we read, 'As he was yet a coming, the devil threw him down and tare him.' He knew that he was about to be expelled, and so did his worst. The double veiling of the heavens only brings on that darkest part of the night which precedes the dawn of day. When the tale of bricks is doubled Moses appears, and the same is true of our still greater Deliverer. Let us take courage and be of good heart; for while we lift Christ on high, and glorify His name, He is on the way to take up the quarrel of His covenant and rout His foes."

Truly, with the prophets of old we can solemnly, confidently, joyfully say: "The great day of the Lord is near, it is near, and hastens greatly." "Even so, come, Lord Jesus." Zephaniah 1:14; Revelation 22:20.

Will There Be a Thousand Years of Peace?

PEACE on earth for a thousand years! Such a millennial golden age would be heralded with enthusiasm by the inhabitants of this war-weary world. But is so cheering a prospect a possibility? Better still, may we regard it as a certainty? That there will be such a period when Jesus comes at His Second Advent, is sincerely believed by many. For a dear conception of its nature and purpose, however, we must seek our answer in God's Word.

When our Lord returns, the saints will be taken from this earth to heaven where, as John saw, "They lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years." Revelation 20:4. The impenitent sinners on the other hand, will be slain by Christ's glory, and will lie upon a desolate world-referred to by John as the bottomless pit." Revelation 20: 1. (Jeremiah 25:33) Satan himself will be confined or bound "to this depopulated world for "a thousand years," and, having no-one to victimize. He will endure the lonely agony of his own thoughts for this period. (Revelation 20:2.) Thus there will be peace on earth for a thousand years after Christ comes the second time, but it will be the peace of universal death.

John saw that during this time "judgment was given" to the saints in heaven (verse 4); for it is God's benevolent purpose that the final punishment of complete annihilation shall not be inflicted on the unrighteous, until all the saints are perfectly satisfied that God's decision is just. Paul refers to this judgment in 1 Corinthians 6:2,3. Thus is assured the removal of any doubts which some are likely to have when they discover that certain individuals have been excluded from heaven.

At the close of the millennium the city of God, the New Jerusalem, will descend where it will forever remain as the new world's metropolis. John saw and described this descent. (Revelation 21:2.) At the same time all the unrighteous dead will be resurrected (Revelation 20:5, first part). The wicked being raised to life, Satan is thereby released for "a little season." Revelation 20:3. He at once prepares his followers to capture the city of God, and after a brief period of preparation and training, they surge forward at Satan's command.

Says John, as he visualized the dramatic scene: "They went up on the breadth of the earth, and compassed the camp of the saints about, and the beloved city: and fire came down from God out of heaven, and devoured them." Revelation 20:9. Thus are Satan, his

demon hosts, and his human followers, destroyed forever, a terrible yet merciful process, during which “the elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also and the works that are therein shall be burned up.” 2 Peter 3:10.

The Psalmist portrayed this very scene in Psalm 46:4-6: “There is a river, the sum whereof shall make glad the city of God, the holy place of the tabernacles of the most High. God is in the midst of her; she shall not be moved: God shall help her, and that right early. The heathen raged, the kingdoms were moved: He uttered His voice, the earth melted.” The Psalmist here visualizes that city in which God sits enthroned, and through which flow the sustaining waters of the River of Life and described also by John in Revelation 22:4. Within its transparent walls are the glorified saints; outside are the milling hosts of the newly resurrected unrighteous—the raging heathen, led by Satan, and inspired by him into believing that their numerical superiority will assure them possession of this dream city if they make a determined assault.

John thus describes the fateful scene. Satan, he said, will go forth among them to deceive the nations which are in the four quarters of the earth, Gog and Magog, to gather them together to baffle: the number of whom is as the sand of the sea.” Revelation 20:8. This is Satan’s last act of deception, his final fling, his last, desperate death struggle.

The hosts with Satan their leader, who thus seek to dispossess God and His saints of the New Jerusalem, are subdued in a moment. Overwhelming, but too late, is their realization that with God the nations are as a drop of a bucket, and are counted as the small dust of the balance. All nations before Him are as nothing; and they are counted to Him less than nothing, and vanity.” Isaiah 40:15, 17.

At the final, dramatic moment, when the great attack is about to be launched, when the last phase of that last great conflict of Armageddon is about to begin, the Almighty God stills the raging tumult with a word. The pent-up passions in those impenitent hearts vanish at the sound of the Creator’s voice. The great project of conquest, designed and launched by Satan, is forthwith abandoned and forgotten. Impressed with a desolate sense of loss as they view the glories of the eternal city, and compelled at last to bow the knee in recognition that the One they have rejected is no mere figment of pious imagination, the righteous are speedily and mercifully consumed. As the Psalmist declared: God “uttered His voice, the earth melted.” Psalm 46:6.

Thus is the millennium bounded by two resurrections “the first resurrection” at the beginning, when Christ returns, which is “the resurrection of life”, and the second resurrection at the close of the period which is “the resurrection of damnation.” John 5:29. At the close of the thousand years, all of the unrighteous will have already endured one death, either before or at the Second Advent. When they are raised, it is but to receive “the second death “from which there will be no awakening. Thus John leaves us this benediction, “Blessed and holy is he that bath part in the first resurrection: on such the second death bath no power.” Revelation 20:6. It is by mercifully inflicting this “second death” on the ungodly that God makes the “full end” referred to by Jeremiah. (Jeremiah 4:27.)

Amidst that dreadful holocaust, the saints will be secure in the city, just as godly Noah was secure in his ark upon the desolating waters of the Flood. And from those cleansing fires will emerge “a new earth, wherein dwells righteousness,” which the saints will possess forever. (2 Peter 3 :13.)

These striking facts about the millennium help us to see how it is possible for the saints to go to heaven above, and yet “inherit the earth.” Matthew 5:5. “But the meek shall inherit the earth; and shall delight themselves in the abundance of peace. The righteous shall inherit the land, and dwell therein forever.” Psalm 37:11, 29.

After this earth’s millennial night, comes the glorious noonday splendor of the eternal day. The “utter end “of sin has at last been made. “Affliction shall not rise up the second time,” for the mouth of the Lord hath spoken it. (Nahum 1:9.)

[What Will Heaven Be Like?](#)

LET US heed our blessed Savior’s admonition and “look up.” Let us catch a vision of the things which are in store for those who love God. For “we are not of them who draw back unto perdition; but of them that believe to the saving of the soul.” Hebrews 10:39. We are heavenward, homeward bound! The thrill of wholesome, joyful anticipation should buoy our spirits up, and inspire us to live our days with hope and courage. Imagine the wondrous scene when Christ gathers to Himself His faithful followers, when the cruel fetters of the tomb release their saintly victims, and they, together with the living saints, are transfigured into immortal beings with an eternity of bliss before them. Picture that glorified host, accompanied by the great angelic throng, as they are led by Christ their King up through the limitless distances of the starry heavens, to the gates of the heavenly Zion, the New Jerusalem. Listen as the command to the angel door-keepers rings forth: “Open You the gates, that the righteous nation which keeps the truth may enter in.” Isaiah 26:2. Picture with rapture the scene as that nation of saints who keep the commandments of God, and who therefore” have right to the tree of life,” triumphantly “enter in through the gates into the city.” Revelation 22:14. The cares and sufferings, the burdens and trials of this world will seem very, very trivial to the glorified saints in that great day. (2 Corinthians 4:17.)

The city will be surpassingly splendid, for its streets will be of gold, its mighty walls of beautiful green jasper, its twelve gates of pearl, and its twelve foundations made entirely of various precious stones. jasper, sapphire, chalcedony, emerald, sardonyx, sardius, chrysolite, beryl, topaz, chrysoprasus, jacinth, and amethyst. (Revelation 21:18-21.) Its gigantic walls will be 375 miles in length on each side (verse 16), enclosing a city of over 140,000 square miles—two hundred times bigger than London, and twice as big as the whole of Great Britain. For size and splendor, the very best this world has ever seen will be utterly insignificant in comparison.

Within will be the tree of life whose fruit and leaves will be “for the healing (service) of the inhabitants (Revelation 22:2), and the crystal waters of the river of life will emerge from the throne of God in the city center. (Revelation 22:1,2.) Imagine the glittering, shimmering splendor of that great city, as the glory of God shines through those jasper walls and foundations of precious stones. Our glorious rainbow is but a diminutive foretaste of the colorful scenes which will forever charm the eyes of the redeemed.

And think of the company! Once more and forever we will see our departed loved ones. Wives will be united to husbands, and husbands to wives. Little children, torn away by the hand of death, will be restored to their parents. And we shall mingle as brothers and sisters with Adam, Noah, Abraham and Joseph, with David, Daniel, Peter, and Paul—an innumerable host of saints from every age. What stories of redeeming grace all will have to tell!

Best of all, our Savior will be there. (Revelation 22:3, 4.) For all eternity He will be our Teacher and constant Associate.

This is the city which John saw would descend to this earth at the close of the millennium. (Revelation 21:2.) This is the city which is destined to be the everlasting capital of our world when it is completely purified and made new. That new world will be a veritable heaven on earth. All will be righteous and holy, for no sinner will be there. (Revelation 21:8; Isaiah 35:8.) There will be no sickness (Isaiah 33:24), and no more sorrow, or crying, or suffering, or pain, or death. (Revelation 21:4.) There “the eyes of the blind shall be opened, and the ears of the deaf shall be unstopped. Then shall the lame man leap as an hart, and the tongue of the dumb sing.” Isaiah 35:5,6. Happy, happy release from all irksome physical troubles. And that wonderful heavenly horde will be one of perfect security. (2 Samuel 7:10.) War will never again rear its hideous head, but every heart will pulsate with everlasting joy and love. (Isaiah 35:10.)

All around today we see signs that the earth is getting old “like a garment.” Psalm 102:25,26. We see appalling loss of fertility. We see, every year, the loss of millions of acres of good land, by erosion. We see vast areas which once enjoyed sub-tropical climates and which brought forth prolific vegetation, but which now are lifeless, frozen wastes. We see terrifying deserts daily extending their suffocating barrenness. We see disintegration, decay, and rapidly diminishing resources.

But that new world will maintain its wealth and glory forever, and the process of disintegration and decay will simply cease to operate. (1 Peter 1:4; Matthew 6:20.)

The erstwhile “wilderness and solitary place” will bring forth luxuriant vegetation, and in the whole world there will be nothing to hurt or to destroy. (Isaiah 65:25.)

Though all the saints will have their city dwelling, built and prepared by the Lord Himself (John 14:2), they will nevertheless occupy the whole earth, and among their other activities “they shall build “their own country dwellings, “and inhabit them. And they shall plant vineyards, and eat the fruit of them.” Isaiah 65:21,22.

The Lord will be present immediately He is called (Isaiah 65:24), to give guidance and instruction. “The earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea.” Isaiah 11:9. A surpassing, thrill, especially for those who love travelling, will be the opportunities of certain ones to “follow the Lamb whither so ever He goes.” Revelation 14:4. They will have the privilege of going with Him as He visits other planets and other worlds of His far-flung universe. Those with astronomical interests will need no telescopes for their observations. They will be able actually to visit those gigantic and splendid worlds whose precise nature is today shrouded in mystery. And there they will be able to tell redemption’s joyful story to the unfallen inhabitants.

One great link with that original Eden world of Adam’s day will be the weekly Sabbath. “It shall come to pass that from one Sabbath to another, shall all flesh come to worship before Me, said the Lord.” Isaiah 66:23. Wherever on this globe the saints may be during the week, they will all make their way each Sabbath day to the New Jerusalem, and unite in worship as one huge congregation before God’s throne of glory. There they will see and hear their Lord and there they will lift their voices in glorious harmonies of praise and adoration to the One who loved them and gave Himself for them.

“Worthy the Lamb that died,” they cry, “To be exalted thus”
“Worthy the Lamb,” our hearts reply, “For He was slain for us.”
The whole creation join in one, To bless the sacred name

Of Him that sits upon the throne, And to adore the Lamb.

Isaac Watts

Says John They sing the song of Moses the servant of God, and the song of the Lamb, saying, Great and marvelous are Thy works, Lord God Almighty; just and true are Thy ways, Thou King of saints.” Revelation 15:1 On the tomb of Dr. John Conder in Bunhill Fields, London, is the inscription:

“I HAVE SINNED - I HAVE TRUSTED - I HAVE REPENTED - I HAVE LOVED - I REST - I SHALL RISE-AND THROUGH THE GRACE OF CHRIST, HOWEVER UNWORTHY - I SHALL REIGN.” Glorious assurance which all may have, for the Lord of love who has given us so many great and precious promises, and who has given us through His Word a picture of the bliss to come, is One in whom we may safely put our trust.

“God is not a man, that He should lie; neither the son ‘of man, that He should repent: bath He said, and shall He not do it? or hath He spoken, and shall He not make it good?” Numbers 23:19.

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