



God's Providence
Returning Thanks for Food
Man's Role
Same Bible Text Today
Breaking of Bread
Clean and Unclean Meats
Footwashing
Drinking
The Ten Commandments
Questions about Salvation
The Indwelling Spirit
Verses about the Holy Spirit
Why We Suffer
Older People

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14 Subjects
Scripturally Studied

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Introduction

Great topics should arrest our attention, especially if they are subjects we have often wondered about but have never carefully examined. The topics that are treated in this work have been carefully selected and should prove interesting and informative.

The author has chosen to use the question-and-answer method in developing the material, long recognized as a good method of instruction.

The questions at the end of each study present a means of seeing just what you have gotten from your study.

The topics and the format make this study booklet ideal for group or class study as well as for private, individual study.

God's Providence

1. "What is meant by the word 'providence'?"

A. It comes from the same family of words as "provide".

B. Webster says, "The foreseeing care and guardianship of God over His creatures...a manifestation of the divine care or direction."

C. It, then, means God's personal supervision of our lives or events to care for given individuals or situations.

2. "Do people today believe in the providence of God?"

A. Of course atheists don't and deists don't (people who do not believe that God ever interferes in the realm of nature). A thorough-going evolutionist doesn't either.

B. But all who in any real sense believe in a personal, loving God are bound to believe in His providence to some extent.

C. Where so many people fail in their belief in the providence of God is that they conceive of His caring for mankind as a unit and not in taking note of the particular needs and lives of individual persons.

3. "Does God bother to take note of the individual? Since He exhibits a general goodness toward all people, does He really do anything extra for individuals?"

A. To cite the way that God led in the lives of Joseph, David, or Daniel, it might be urged against using their examples that all of them lived in the age of God's special miracles.

B. But here are two undeniable proofs of God's

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providential oversight of our individual lives: (1) prayer, and (2) chastening. If God teaches us to pray, and He does (I Thess. 5:17); if He teaches us to pray concerning our personal needs and spiritual desires, and He does (Mark 11:24); and if He promises to answer our prayers, and He does (Matt. 7:7-11), then the fact is established for those who believe the Bible that God does pay attention to us individuals, that He listens to us individually, and that He does things for the individual. Furthermore if God chastens each of His erring children, and He does (Heb. 12:6), then it is again evident that God does not lump the human family altogether into one big unit and treat everybody alike.

4. "But doesn't Matt. 5:45 say that God sends rain and sunshine on the just and unjust alike?"

A. Yes, God does bless even the wicked with customary material blessings, for He is their Creator also, but who says that all God has to give and all He can and will do for people are sunshine and rain? Who says that man has no need but what rain and sunshine will take care of? What about his personal problems and his decisions? What about his mental, psychological, and spiritual needs? Truly there is far more to life than rain and sunshine.

B. God talks about other blessings besides the universal blessings He sends on all people. He teaches us to pray for additional things (Jas. 1:5; John 15:7; Matt. 6:6). There are some things we will never receive unless we ask for them (Jas. 4:2). Prayer is the key to realizing the fulness of God's blessings. Those who seek God's kingdom and His righteousness before they do anything else will be given blessings that others living in the same world, in the same community, and at the same time will not realize (Matt. 6:33).

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5. "If people believe in the special providence of God, then, it will surely stimulate a greater prayer-life as well as cause them to be more appreciative of the things they have. Isn't this true?"

A. Exactly. And you will find that where people do not believe in such providence, they do not pray, and if they do it is more or less lip-worship and not heart-worship. This explains why so many people are not personally grateful to God for what they have.

B. Furthermore this is why when times of great difficulty come that such people are really beset by fears, for they do not know what it means to put their trust in a living God who will take care of them in whatever manner He may see fit to do.

6. "But aren't there times when it does seem that God is not intervening in behalf of a person's specific need?"

A. Yes, to us human beings there are times when it seems we experience and endure some of the same hardships and difficulties as other sons of Adam who are not Christians. Solomon observed something very similar: "There is a vanity which is done upon the earth; that there be just men, unto whom it happeneth according to the work of the wicked" (Eccl. 8:14). In commenting on the sufferings and physical corruption of mankind, Paul observes, "And not only they (the unsaved), but ourselves also, which have the firstfruits of the Spirit (we Christians), even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting for the adoption, to wit, the redemption of our body" (Rom. 8:23). We do not want to forget that all of Adam's offspring will suffer according to the pronouncements found in Gen. 3:16-19.

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B. This is not to deny that God exercises special providence for His children (as we have seen above), but it is all subject to His own discretion, and we must ever let His will prevail.

7. "Is there a difference between the providential and the miraculous?"

A. Yes. Both display the power and workings of God, but the miraculous always has two characteristics: (1) the effect is always instantaneous; and (2) the result is always complete. For examples see the miracles recorded in Matt. 8:13, 15, 26, 28-32. When we today pray in the realm of God's providential action, we do not say God has refused to answer our prayer for a sick person when he gets well over a period of days instead of instantaneously, and we may settle for a great improvement without demanding that he be as well as when he was a young person.

B. Note--if the Christians of the apostolic age could themselves pray and realize as great an effect as the apostles working miracles, then miracles would not prove that the apostles were apostles. It was such miracles, though, that Paul referred to as "signs of an apostle" (II Cor. 12:12).

8. "Why do you believe in God's providence, and how do you know it happens?"

A. Our faith in God's providence is based on the promises of God's Word (like Prov. 3:6; Psa. 37:4,5; I Pet. 3:12; Rom. 8:28; and many others) and the accounts of divine providence in the Bible (in Joseph's life, in Esther's, in Hezekiah's, in Daniel's, and in many other Biblical cases).

B. We know it is a fact by having witnessed it many times in our own lives and in the lives of other Christians whom we have known.

GOD'S PROVIDENCE

QUESTIONS

1. What do you understand by "God's providence"?
2. Name those who do and who don't believe in God's providence.
3. Give Biblical proof that God does pay attention to our individual cases.
4. Show that Matt. 5:45 does not rule out God's special providence for His children.
5. What should our belief in God's special providence do for us?
6. What differences are there between the providential and the miraculous?

Returning Thanks for Food

1. "Preachers speak with such concern over those who do not return thanks for their meals. Is this a justifiable concern over a matter that may or may not be done?"

A. People should be taught to be thankful for all their blessings whether material or spiritual. Colossians alone says, "We give THANKS to God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ...since we heard of your faith in Christ Jesus, and of the love which ye have to all the saints, for the hope which is laid up for you in heaven" (Col. 1:3-5); "Giving THANKS unto the Father" (Col. 1:12); "Abounding therein with THANKSGIVING" (Col. 2:7); "Be ye THANKFUL" (Col. 3:15); "Whatsoever ye do in work or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving THANKS to God and the Father by him" (Col. 3:17); and, "Continue in prayer, and watch in the same with THANKSGIVING" (Col. 4:2). Jas. 1:17 tells us that God is the One from whom all blessings come.

B. We are indeed ungrateful if we do not want to express appreciation to God for what He continually does for us.

C. Then with the Bible showing us so definitely that in the matter of eating we should first give thanks to God, it is not left up to our discretion as to whether we should or should not. Yes, preachers are justified for being concerned over those who do not express thanks to God for their food.

2. "Where does the Bible say anything about returning thanks for food?"

In a number of passages.

A. We see it three times in Jesus' life. Even when feeding the 5,000 miraculously Jesus gave thanks before distributing the food to the people (John 6:

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11). He did the same when feeding the 4,000 (Matt. 15: 36). And He did likewise with the two men at Emmaus (Luke 24:30).

B. Even when Paul was surrounded by a shipload of non-Christians (mostly prisoners), he stood forth in the midst of them all and thanked God for the food they were all about to eat (Acts 27:33-35).

C. I Tim. 4:3 expressly says that our food is to be received "with thanksgiving", and the same expression is used in I Tim. 4:4.

With the triple example of Jesus and the example of Paul fortified with the plain statements in I Tim. 4, it is a matter of God's dictation that we thank Him for what we eat. It is not man's discretion that determines whether he should or not.

3. "Would this apply to meals eaten in restaurants, at lunch time where one is working, and to Christian young people eating their meals at school?"

A. The place does not alter the teaching. One should be thankful for a meal whether eaten at home or elsewhere. A Christian should not be ashamed to thank God wherever he might be at mealtime.

B. While thanking God for our food eaten in a public setting, we should be careful not to parade our thanks--remember the warning in Matt. 6:5. Make your prayer as private as possible under the conditions. Please don't say in a restaurant, "Will everybody please be quiet for a minute while I return thanks for my food?" And don't eat a meal at a restaurant and refuse to thank God for it simply because you are ashamed to do so.

4. "Isn't there a danger that expressing thanks at mealtime will become a meaningless form by doing it so often?"

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A. Yes, there could be a danger if one is only mouthing words and not letting words express the gratitude he has in his heart.

B. The same could be urged against saying, "Thank you," to people each time they do something for us. When someone gives you a ride, don't you thank him each time when leaving the car? When someone hands you a song book at church, don't you thank him each time?

C. Anything done sincerely will avoid any danger toward formality. When we bow our heads before we eat, we should always be thankful not only for the food but that we are well and able to be at the table, and that our bodies are capable of receiving nourishment from the food.

Let us, then, thank our heavenly Father at every meal!

QUESTIONS

1. Who is the source of all our blessings?
2. What short New Testament book was cited as containing several references to being thankful?
3. Name 3 times we see Jesus thanking God before eating.
4. When do we see Paul returning thanks for a meal?
5. What New Testament book speaks about our receiving food "with thanksgiving"?
6. Would the above teaching and examples still apply to a meal eaten away from home?
7. What warning from Matt. 6 do we need to heed when returning thanks for a meal eaten in a public place?
8. Why is the argument that such will become too common and therefore meaningless if we return thanks for our food every meal not valid?

Man's Role

1. "To you what most represents the superiority of man to all else that God has created?"

A. Of course, we cannot overlook the fact that man alone is said to have been created in God's image (Gen. 1:26,27). Even yet we may not fully comprehend all that is meant by that expression, but it certainly relates man to God in a way that nothing else of His creation is.

B. Then there's Jesus' statement, "How much then is a man better than a sheep?" (Matt. 12:12), and His affirmation, "Ye are of more value than many sparrows" (Matt. 10:31). The fact that man is greater than the animal world is seen many times and in many ways in the Bible: (1) man has the right to kill and eat animals (Gen. 9:2,3); (2) if an animal killed a human being, the animal was to be killed (Exo. 21:28); (3) animals were used as sacrifices for the sins of man (Lev. 5:5,6).

C. Also the way God created human beings with a greater mind, more ingenuity, more creativity, and some of his special physical characteristics that enable man to do more than animals can do: (1) man being a biped, he can stand on his lower limbs, freeing his upper limbs for useful purposes; (2) he has hands on his upper limbs which are more useful than another pair of feet would be; (3) his having thumbs opposite his sets of fingers gives him many superior advantages; etc.).

D. Then there's the fact that God has placed man over His creation (Heb. 2:6-8). As God was about to create man in the beginning, He assigned him this role (Gen. 1:26), and He spoke to man about it (Gen. 1:28).

2. "How does this latter thought work out in man's fulfilling this role of being

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over God's creation?"

In many ways.

A. Man can cut down trees and make lumber, furniture, posts, paper, and many other items made from wood as he decides to do, or he can burn it for fuel if he wishes to do so.

B. Man can plow the land and raise field crops and gardens.

C. He can build ponds and dams and trap run-off water to use during the dry season for irrigation purposes or for fishing and boating or for generating electrical power.

D. To protect himself against the elements of adverse weather, man can build a house that will keep him dry on rainy days, warm on cold days, cool in hot weather, and safe from marauding animals and where he can protect his possessions from rain, wind, snow, and other human beings.

E. If he doesn't want his food to spoil, he builds a refrigerator. If he wants to go faster than walking or riding a horse, he builds a car. If he wants to fly and get there even faster, he builds an airplane. If he wants to enjoy vegetation and flowers during the winter time, he raises house-plants. If people living in the north want oranges and bananas and pineapples, they pay people living farther south to raise them and other people to transport them to them. If man wants to read the newspaper after the sun has gone down, he turns on a light. If his eyes begin to fail, he makes glasses. If his hearing begins to fail, he gets a hearing-aid. If his legs give out, he gets a cane or crutches or a wheel chair. If he has lost too many teeth to time, he extracts the remaining ones and gets a man-made set. If some internal problem threatens his life, he has somebody operate on him. And we could go on and on to show that God has not only given man the intelligence necessary to occupy

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his special role but that man is constantly exercising that right.

3. "But if God wants to show His displeasure with the wickedness of mankind by sending drouth conditions, a plague of grasshoppers, etc., wouldn't we be fighting against God to irrigate and offset the drouth and spray to get rid of the grasshoppers? How then can God bring hardships on sinful man?"

A. No doubt God does send such problems at times because of the wickedness of man. He still exercises some moral oversight of man so that He can call for hard times when He knows this will help bring man to his senses.

B. But God is not limited in His choice of means whereby to humble man. Irrigation may handle the drouth situation, but farmers in irrigated sections realize that a big hail storm can put an end to their crops. God will have plenty of ways left to deal with sinning man when we have done all we can to overcome the hardships of nature.

4. "In Heb. 2:7, where it says of man, 'Thou crownedst him with glory and honor, and didst set him over the works of thy hands: thou hast put all things in subjection under his feet,' the next verse goes on to say, 'But now we see not yet all things put under him.' What does that mean?"

A. When God put all things under the foot of man in Gen. 1, that was before man fell into sin. Indeed at that time everything in nature was submissive to the way of man. There was no opposition to man from nature: Adam and Eve lived in perfect happiness and triumph.

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B. But while man is still over nature, nature at times rises up against man--ever since Gen. 3 when God pronounced those sentences against the human race for going the way of sin. God pronounced certain curses on man that remain to the present day (see Gen. 3:16-19).

C. That Heb. 2:8 statement ("But now we see not yet all things put under him") is immediately followed by these words: "But we see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death, crowned with glory and honor; that he by the grace of God should taste death for every man" (v. 9). Jesus came to make an atonement for man's sins and to begin his redemption, and when He comes again it will be to complete that redemption--we yet wait for the "redemption of our body" (Rom. 8:23). When divine redemption is complete, and we find ourselves in God's glorious New Jerusalem described in Rev. 21:1--22:2, all the curses that have kept us from being completely the victor over the forces of nature will be past, for the very next verse says, "There shall be no more curse" (Rev. 22:3), "for God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away. And he that sat upon the throne said, Behold I make all things new" (Rev. 21:4,5).

In conclusion it is truly great that God has placed us over His creation and at the same time given us the opportunity to be His children (I John 3:1). God has thus honored man, and man is at his best when he realizes that his is the middle position: over the things of the earth materially and under God Himself spiritually. To live in harmony with this realization is life at its best--to know that he can utilize the natural resources available to him while recognizing that he himself is to submit to the mind and hand of God that are over him.

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QUESTIONS

1. In what ways is man superior to the rest of God's creation?
2. What role did God assign man in His universe?
3. Show some of the ways man exercises that role.
4. What keeps man from now having perfect control in God's universe?
5. Who is still greater than man?

Same Bible Text Today

1. "Our English Bible is a translation. Does that mean we cannot rely on it? Some people say we cannot depend on it because it has been translated so many times that what we have in our Bible today is far different from what the original was. Help!"

A. Yes, our English Bible is a translation, but if English-speaking people are to know the Word of God, it must be translated out of the original languages (mainly Hebrew for the Old Testament and Greek for the New) into English.

B. But don't be worried by those who say the Bible has been translated so many times that it is vastly different today from the original. Our English Bible has been translated directly from the Hebrew and the Greek. The way some critics of the Bible talk you would think the Bible was translated out of Hebrew and Greek into Spanish, and from Spanish into French, and from French into Swedish, and from Swedish into English. If that were the case, yes our English translation would be so many steps away from the original that we could not depend on it. But since our English Bible has been translated directly from the original languages, we can be just as confident of it as two diplomats from foreign countries are of their translators' words between them.

2. "Do we have the original copies of the New Testament books today? If so, who has them?"

A. As far as we know, they are no longer in existence. The poverty of the apostles likely necessitated their writing most of their communications on papyrus writing material rather than the expensive parchment and the even more expensive vellum of their day.

B. Papyrus, the forerunner of paper, was brittle,

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and as these original copies were handled often as various congregations made personal copies of them, likely an ultimate death befell the originals.

3. "What are the oldest known copies of the original Greek New Testament now in existence?"

A. The Sinaitic copy was made around 325 and is now owned by England.

B. The Vatican copy is in the Vatican Library at Rome. It too was made around 325.

It is thought that these two very valuable copies could have been among the 50 copies of the Bible that the Emperor Constantine had the famous Eusebius and his staff copy in the early part of his reign. They are on the most expensive vellum and would indicate such a royal history.

C. The Alexandrian copy and the Ephraem copy were both made around the year 400.

These 4 are the earliest known copies of the Greek New Testament in existence.

4. "If the earliest of these were copied around 325, how do we know that somebody didn't write the New Testament about then?"

A. It is easy to trace the New Testament from 325 right back to the days of the apostles through ancient versions and numerous quotations from it. For instance the Peshito Syriac version was translated about 150 as was the Old Latin version. And the two Egyptian versions (the Bahiric and the Sahidic) for the two sections of Egypt (Lower Egypt and Upper Egypt) were translated around 175.

B. Thus within but a few years after the apostles and their inspired associates wrote the New Testament books, a translation was made of them for the Syrian

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Christians in the east, a translation was made for the Latin-speaking Christians in the west, and two translations were made for the Egyptian Christians of Africa.

C. These translations prove that the New Testament did not come into existence around the days of Constantine. These very early versions help us know that the New Testament traces to the days of the apostles. Before any book is translated into another language or languages, it must attain such prominence in its original language that the demand for it in other languages is created. That took much longer in the early centuries after Christ than it does today. This fact argues for the New Testament's being in existence quite sometime before our earliest known versions, especially since it was translated for people in widely separated areas.

5. "Is it true that the literature of the early Christian writers abounds in quotations from the New Testament, showing that the New Testament was surely in existence from the apostles onward, and that it was the same as our New Testament today?"

Yes, that is true. Following are some samples and some observations.

A. Clement of Rome wrote to the Corinthian church about 96 A.D. concerning its long-standing problem of division. He wrote, "Take up the Epistle of the blessed Apostle Paul (referring to I Corinthians--D.G.H.). What did he write to you in the beginning of the gospel? Truly, under the inspiration of the Spirit he wrote to you concerning himself and Cephas and Apollos, because even then parties had been formed among them."

B. Polycarp was born around 55 A.D. and was bap-

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tized in 70 A.D. Thus he grew up right during the apostolic age. He was appointed an elder in Smyrna by apostles. He wrote a letter to the Philippian church. Notice how many Biblical statements are found in his letter to it: "Wherefore girding up your loins serve the Lord in fear and truth, as those who have forsaken the vain, empty talk and error of the multitude, and believed in Him who raised up our Lord Jesus Christ from the dead and gave Him glory and a throne at His right hand. To Him all things in heaven and on earth are subject. Him every spirit serves. He comes as the judge of the living and the dead." These lines are just a sample of the several chapters in his letter to the Philippians.

C. Ignatius was born around 60 A.D. and was martyred just 10 years after the death of the apostle John. On his fateful trip to Rome from Antioch he wrote letters in which are references to Matt., Mark, Luke, John, 9 of Paul's epistles, I Pet., and I John--15 New Testament books (more than half of the New Testament books).

If space permitted, we could give you an abundance of such quotations from their sermons and other writings and from those of other men also. It has been stated that if the New Testament as a book were lost, almost the entirety of it could be reproduced from writers of the early centuries of Christianity such as Clement, Polycarp, Ignatius, Justin, Irenaeus, Tertullian, Origen, and others. Irenaeus's writings alone contain quotations from almost every book of the New Testament. And there are 1,800 quotations from the New Testament in the writings of Tertullian alone.

The impact of all this is seen from the following statement by McGarvey: "The force and value of the evidence from quotations can be more properly appreciated if we compare the evidence from the same source for some of the most noted classical writings of antiquity. The writings of Herodotus, the most famous of

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Greek historians, are quoted by only one author in the first century after they were written, by only one in the second, by one in the third, and by only two in the fourth. Thucydides, second among Greek historians, is not quoted at all during the first two centuries after he wrote. Livy, the early Roman historian, is quoted by only one writer in the first hundred years, and the first to quote Tacitus is Tertullian, who wrote about 100 years later. If then our task had been to trace back to their authors the works of these celebrated writers, works the genuineness of which is never called in question, the case which we could make for them would be weakness itself compared with that which we have made for the writings of the New Testament."

Thus there is no question but what the Greek manuscripts from which our English Bible has been translated can be traced right back to the age and authorship of the apostles.

QUESTIONS

1. Is our English Bible a translation of a translation of a translation, etc., or has it been translated directly from the languages in which it was written?
2. Why are the original copies of the apostles' writings not known to exist today?
3. What are the 4 most ancient Greek copies of the New Testament in our possession, and at what approximate dates were they made?
4. Give the names and approximate dates for the earliest translations known.
5. Name some of the early Christian writers who quoted freely from the New Testament.

Breaking of Bread

1. "Aren't there some who say that 'breaking of bread' in Acts does not mean the Lord's supper but a regular meal?"

A. Yes, and there are also some who say it means "preaching".

B. Those who deny that "breaking of bread" refers to the Lord's supper possibly do so because they are not giving the Lord's supper as prominent a place in their religion as is taught in the New Testament.

C. We should be Biblically prepared to meet their arguments.

2. "On what do they base their contention that 'breaking of bread' is eating a common meal?"

They base it on something the two men of Emmaus said. After the resurrection Jesus was walking north-west out of Jerusalem toward evening. He fell in with two men walking out to their hometown Emmaus. They urged Him to spend the night with them instead of traveling on, not realizing it was Jesus. During the beginning of their evening meal, "their eyes were opened, and they knew him; and he vanished out of their sight" (Luke 24:31). They immediately went back to Jerusalem and told the apostles "how he was known of them in breaking of bread" (Luke 24:35). This event was not the Lord's supper but their evening meal.

3. "How can we determine when it means the Lord's supper and when it means a regular meal?"

There will be something within the text itself that will indicate to which it refers. By so doing it is easy to show that both Acts 2:42 and Acts 20:7 def-

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initely refer to the Lord's supper.

A. Acts 2:42. In this passage Luke is narrating the spiritual faithfulness of the first converts to Christianity. He says they continued steadfastly in four things: the apostles' doctrine, fellowship, breaking of bread, and prayers. Does Luke mean to say in this passage, "They continued steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship and prayer, and you really ought to see those fellows eat?" Of course not, but that is what he is saying if "breaking of bread" in this passage means common eating. This passage is also useful to show that the expression does not mean preaching, for the preaching is involved in the "apostles' doctrine" in this passage.

B. Acts 20:7. This passage says the disciples had come together on the first day of the week "to break bread", and that Paul being present preached to them. Now why do saints come together on the Lord's day? To eat common food? Of course not. They come together for spiritual reasons. Surely this "breaking of bread" is not common eating but the Lord's supper.

4. "What about 'breaking of bread' in Acts 2:46? If this means the Lord's supper, then we should observe the Lord's supper every day."

Having established that Acts 20:7 does mean the Lord's supper, it is easy to show by contrast that Acts 2:46 does not.

A. In Acts 20:7 they CAME TOGETHER to break bread while in Acts 2:46 they WENT HOME TO THEIR HOUSES FROM THE ASSEMBLY to break bread.

B. Acts 20:7 as corroborated by early church history shows a WEEKLY OBSERVANCE of the Lord's supper, something quite different from the "breaking of bread" in Acts 2:46 which they did EVERY DAY.

C. When you read, "Breaking bread from house to house, did eat their meat with gladness and singleness

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of heart," in Acts 2:46, the "did eat their meat with gladness and singleness of heart" is in apposition with "breaking bread from house to house", referring to the same matter.

These last verses of Acts 2 show the daily life of the new converts: every day they came together in the temple and then broke up to go home, happy in Christ, praising God, having favor with their fellowmen, and seeing their numbers increase daily.

5. "What about 'had broken bread' in Acts 20:11?"

The question is, was this the Lord's supper or a meal? They came together to break bread (the Lord's supper). It would seem that after they had done that, Paul preached to them, Luke mentioning that he preached "until midnight". After restoring Eutychus to life, he came back up to the hall, ate, and waited until daybreak, when he took his leave of them. It had to be regular eating--it was not even done on the first day of the week, for it was after "midnight".

QUESTIONS

1. On what do some base their contention that "breaking of bread" is a common meal?
2. How can we tell when that expression means a meal and when it means the Lord's supper?
3. Why does "breaking of bread" mean the Lord's supper in Acts 2:42?
4. Why does it mean the Lord's supper in Acts 20:7?
5. Why does it mean eating food in Acts 2:46?
6. Why does it mean eating food in Acts 20:11?

Clean and Unclean Meats

1. "Didn't the Jews in Bible times have a distinction between animals they could and could not eat?"

Yes, not only concerning dry-land animals but also concerning fishes of the waters and fowls of the air.

2. "Just what meats could they eat and not eat?"

A. Land animals: They could eat the ox, sheep, goat, hart, roebuck, fallow deer, wild boar, pygarg, wild ox, and chamois (Deut. 14:4,5). They were not to eat the camel, hare, coney, and swine (Deut. 14:7,8), nor any animal with paws--the entire cat-family (Lev. 11:27), and not the weasel, mouse, tortoise, ferret, chameleon, lizard, snail, and mole (Lev. 11:29,30).

B. Fishes: They could eat any fish that had fins and scales but none that lacked them (Deut. 14:9,10).

C. Fowls: They could not eat the eagle, ossifrage, osprey, glede, kite, vulture, raven, owl, night hawk, cuckow, hawk, little owl, great owl, swan, pelican, gier eagle, cormorant, stork, heron, lapwing, and bat (Deut. 14:12-18). Four-footed fowls that creep were not to be eaten (Lev. 11:20) although they could eat the locust, bald locust, beetle, and grasshopper (Lev. 11:22,23).

3. "Did these distinctions begin with Moses?"

A. No. In the days of the flood there was a distinction (Gen. 7:2) which we presume to be the same as that later given in the law of Moses.

B. The distinction existed in Noah's day primarily with reference to what animals could be sacrificed

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clean animals (Gen. 8:20).

4, "Are we still under these distinctions today?"

Not according to the following New Testament passages:

A. Mark 7:18,19. In Jesus' explanation of what He had said to the Pharisees about defilement, He gave teaching that purged or made clean all meats. This was new covenant teaching expounded ahead of time. Jesus made all meats clean!

B. Acts 10:11-15. This sheet contained all manner of beasts unclean to a Jew as evidenced from Peter's reply to the voice. When he refused to kill and eat those animals and fowls that had been unclean throughout the Mosaic dispensation, the voice said, "What God hath cleansed, that call not common." Notice the words, "What God hath cleansed." Then God has cleansed every animal and every fowl on which Peter had looked even as He is now pleased to acknowledge the cleanness of Gentiles through Christ, a lesson being taught by this object lesson on Simon's housetop. Some try to side-step the issue by saying it was the lesson involved (the cleansing of the Gentiles) that God was talking about, but God used an object lesson to fit the Gentiles' case (something that had once been unclean has now been made clean).

C. I Tim. 4:1-5. One of the doctrines of then-coming apostasy was commanding to abstain from meats which God had created. When needed today no species of meat is to be refused from a religious standpoint. We do not have to eat everything, but we may as far as divine legislation is concerned, for "every creature of God is good, and nothing to be refused if it be received with thanksgiving: for it is sanctified by the word of God and prayer."

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5. "Why then did God give these distinctions in Old Testament times?"

A. God thereby demonstrated His authority to tell man what he could partake of and what he could not. When they thought of food, they had to remember what God had said. Notice too they were not even to touch that which was unclean (Lev. 11:8). In like manner the New Testament says, "Come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and TOUCH NOT THE UNCLEAN THING: and I will receive you (II Cor. 6:17). The Old Testament Jews were in a physical covenant with God while we are in a spiritual covenant with Him. They were a physical nation entered by physical birth, they had a mark in their flesh (circumcision), and they were promised an earthly land (Canaan). God therefore told them of these physical things that they could not eat. We today are a spiritual people, the new covenant is entered by spiritual birth, we have spiritual circumcision, and we are going to a heavenly land. God has therefore told us what to embody in our spiritual lives and what to leave alone as unclean. Yes, God has this authority, and we are to respect His distinctions. Touch not the unclean thing!

B. In those days God gave the Jew the really good things and withheld those animals that were not so good. Who wouldn't rather eat beef than a mouse? Who wouldn't rather eat a pigeon than a vulture? And God to this day gives us the good things and withholds the bad. Rom. 12:9 says to abhor that which is evil and to cleave to that which is good. How the devil works to get people to think God is heartless and mean in His prohibitions, leaving us nothing that we can do. But He has left us much that we can do--everything except those things that are not good.

C. In the days of the law, when man was offering animal sacrifices to God, man was not given the clean

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animals to eat and allowed to sacrifice the unclean ones. No, when a man went to sacrifice to God, he had to take one of the very animals he himself could eat and sacrifice it to God. And today we need to realize that God wants a clean sacrifice, a holy sacrifice, a sacrifice well-pleasing to Him. No wonder Rom. 12:1 says, "Present your bodies a living sacrifice to God, holy, acceptable to God."

D. At the time that Dr. Charles Weiss was director of the Clinical and Research Laboratories of Mt. Zion Hospital of San Francisco, he saw from his vantage point another reason: "When we recall the absence of facilities for refrigeration and sterilization of food during Biblical times, we must regard the dietary laws instituted by Moses as nothing less than life-saving. Many of the land and water creatures whose use as food he prohibited were either commonly infected or subject to infection. The pig is frequently infested with flukes, trichina or with pork tapeworm. Rabbits may be infected with a disease known as tularemia. Shell fish are frequently contaminated with human sewage and typhoid bacilli. All of these were placed on the forbidden list, thus avoiding epidemics of food infection and food poisoning" (an excerpt from an article in "Scientific Monthly" by Dr. Weiss).

6. "Are there some today who still cling to those Old Testament laws about meats?"

Yes, most seventh-day bodies do. But that does not make it right. We do not need to fear that we are doing wrong by eating meats that were forbidden under the Old Testament. We have seen that God has cleansed all meats so that we can eat in full assurance of faith--faith that comes by hearing, hearing by the Word of God (Rom. 10:17).

In closing let us not forget the spiritual ful-

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fillments in our lives today of those dietary laws of the Old Testament.

QUESTIONS

1. Name 3 land animals that were considered "clean".
2. Name 2 land animals that were considered "unclean".
3. What fishes were considered "clean"?
4. Name 5 fowls that were considered "unclean".
5. Were they allowed to eat locusts?
6. What purpose did the distinction between "clean" and "unclean" animals and fowls serve before the flood?
7. Cite 2 New Testament passages that show we are no longer under those distinctions.
8. Give 2 reasons why God made those distinctions for Old Testament times.
9. What religious people still hold to those distinctions?

Footwashing

1. "Since we as a people do not practice footwashing, it bothers me everytime I read Jesus' words, 'If I then, your Lord and Master, have washed your feet; ye also ought to wash one another's feet' (John 13:14). I don't know how to get around this verse."

A. We shouldn't try to "get around this verse" any more than we would any other verse of Scripture. "All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness" (II Tim. 3:16).

B. We want to understand the exact intention of God in each passage of Scripture.

2. "How do you understand this verse to be taken?"

This statement is part of John 13:1-17. A study of these 17 verses leads one to conclude that Jesus was washing His disciples' feet as an object lesson to impress the apostles with a much needed truth.

A. For sometime the apostles had been discussing among themselves the matter of which would be the greatest in the coming kingdom. Jesus had already set a little child in their midst and used the child as an object lesson to teach them about humility (Matt. 18:1-4).

B. At the same supper where He washed their feet Luke's account that says nothing of the footwashing says, "There was also a strife among them, which of them should be accounted the greatest" (Luke 22:24). Jesus did not disregard their discussion. He said to them at that time, "The kings of the Gentiles exercise lordship over them; and they that exercise authority upon them are called benefactors. But ye shall not be

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so: but he that is greatest among you, let him be as the younger; and he that is chief, as he that doth serve. For whether is greater, he that sitteth at meat, or he that serveth? is not he that sitteth at meat? but I am among you as he that serveth" (Luke 22: 25-27). How appropriate for Him to exemplify what He was teaching with this object lesson of washing their feet!

3. "If this be Jesus' intention, could you show this by going down through the passage and pointing it out?"

A. In v. 7 Jesus said to Peter, "What I do thou knowest not now" (Peter knew Jesus was about to wash his feet); "but thou shalt know hereafter" (in other words there was a lesson to be learned from what He was doing). Now in v. 12 (after He had completed washing their feet) Jesus asked, "Know ye what I have done to you?" They could have said, "You have washed our feet," but they awaited Jesus' explanation.

B. In their culture it was a servant's role to wash the feet of another--the lesser served while the greater was served. Jesus was reversing that role--just as He said in Luke's account ("He that is greatest among you...is...he that doth serve...I am among you as he that serveth"). He said that what He had done was an example to them--that instead of arguing among themselves who was going to be the greatest, they should serve one another in various ways as servants of one another--just as Paul said, "By love serve one another" (Gal. 5:13). Sometimes they might serve one another by washing their feet and sometimes by doing other things for them.

4. "Can you prove from the text that Jesus was not instituting a church ordinance of footwashing but teaching them to serve one a-

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nother in various ways in everyday life?"

Yes, that is easy to show.

A. Notice the last verse in this passage (v. 17): "If ye know these things...", then what did He go on to say, "Happy are ye if ye do IT (footwashing)?" No, "Happy are ye if you do THEM" (plural)—various things!

B. Whenever and wherever we take the servant's role and minister to the needs of others, we are following the example of Jesus. There are so many ways we can "wash feet", so to speak, and it is the part of the Christian to do so at every occasion: "As ye therefore have opportunity, let us do good unto all men, especially unto them who are of the household of faith" (Gal. 6:10).

5. "Do those churches that observe footwashing as an ordinance do it exactly as the Bible teaches?"

Let us notice three ways they deviate.

A. Jesus washed dirty feet because they needed washing while people today who participate in a public footwashing are washing feet that are clean. In Bible days their shoes were of a sandal-variety, and their roads and paths were dusty. They had to wash their feet often. It was just such dusty feet that Jesus washed that night. But when footwashers go to their services today, they wash their feet before going--they wouldn't think of taking off their shoes and socks or stockings and have others see their feet dirty. In their service, then, they wash feet that are already clean.

B. They wash feet in a public service while Jesus did it privately. The Passover was not observed in the temple but in homes. Each family had its own passover meal (two small families could observe it together--

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Exo. 12:3,4). Jesus and His apostles, living together as a group as they did, formed a family-type group there in the upper room. The apostles were to teach the converts to observe all things. Jesus commanded them (Matt. 28:20), but there is no record of their ever teaching any church to observe footwashing.

C. Some who wash feet as a church ordinance wash only one foot while Jesus washed both feet of each person (John 13:6-10). If we regarded this as a divinely-instituted church ordinance and not as an example and object lesson, we would not think of washing only one foot of a person.

6. "What about I Tim. 5:10?"

A. Some, of course, think this proves that John 13:1-17 is to be taken as a church ordinance. But does it? We shall see.

B. That verse is part of a section about aged widows who should receive financial support from the church. Such a widow was to be of a certain age (at least 60--v. 9). She was to have been the wife of one man (v. 9). She was to be a woman well reported of for her good works: one who has brought up children, lodged strangers, washed saints' feet, relieved the afflicted, and diligently followed every good work. Where do you do the above things--in the church service or just anywhere in everyday life? Everything mentioned is something done at home or in the community as a matter of everyday life and not something done merely in a church service.

In closing let us get the true meaning of John 13, realizing that we are to do far more than merely wash somebody's clean foot in a church service. We are to render loving, humble service to one another whenever we can and wherever we can. This will demonstrate that we are indeed disciples of the Lord Jesus and are doing as He did.

FOOTWASHING**QUESTIONS**

1. Why should we not try to "get around" John 13:14?
2. What had the apostles been discussing among themselves?
3. What earlier object lesson had Jesus used in teaching them about what they were discussing?
4. According to Jesus' teaching, who is greater—the one who serves or the one who is served?

Drinking

1. "We all know that drunkenness is a sin, but what is wrong with social drinking or having a beer now and then just so long as a person doesn't get drunk?"

A. First of all let us establish from the Bible the sinfulness of drunkenness. This is seen in both Old and New Testaments (see Deut. 21:20; Prov. 25:20, 21; Prov. 20:1; Isa. 5:11 and Hab. 2:15 for Old Testament verses and I Cor. 6:9,10; Gal. 5:19-21; Luke 21:34 and Rom. 13:13 for New Testament verses).

B. Let us not forget that people do not get themselves either into drunkenness or alcoholism except from a social drinking or beer-drinking beginning. Some years ago your writer was conducting a meeting in the northern Ozarks. The community knew the stand of the church against alcoholic beverages. While we were calling in the community, two different men on two different calls voiced their thoughts about the matter, both being careful to affirm that drunkenness was wrong but that they couldn't see anything wrong with social drinking. I complimented them for their thoughts about drunkenness and then went on to ask, "Have you ever been drunk?" Both of them very sheepishly answered that they had been drunk "a few times". I told them that this is one of several reasons for not taking a social drink, that my total abstinence has kept me from ever being drunk while their social drinking had not totally kept them from drunkenness.

2. "But doesn't Eph. 5:18 forbid only drinking to excess, not sensible drinking?"

You might get that impression on that verse from the King James, but most versions do not translate the Greek word "asotia" that way. American Standard: "Be

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not drunken with wine, WHEREIN IS RIOT, but be filled with the Spirit." Revised Standard: "Do not get drunk with wine, for THAT IS DEBAUCHERY; but be filled with the Spirit." New English: "Do not give way to DRUNKENNESS and DISSIPATION that goes with it, but let the Holy Spirit fill you." W. E. Vine's "An Expository Dictionary of New Testament Words" supports the thought that Eph. 5:18 is not upholding the idea of controlled-drinking (social drinking) but is outrightly condemning drunkenness: "Asotia denotes prodigality, profligacy, riot." Vine further points out "asotia's" relationship to asotos" (wastefully) translated "riotous living" in the Prodigal Son parable (Luke 15:13) and to "aselgeia" (lasciviousness, outrageous conduct, wanton violence). So there is really no comfort from Eph. 5:18 to those advocating social drinking.

3. "But didn't Jesus turn water into wine at the wedding feast?"

A. You should know that the Greek word "wine" in the New Testament is "oinos", a word that has a wide range of meanings and usages. Fred Miller in his very useful work entitled, "Thinking on Drinking," points out that just as the Septuagint translators in their translation of the Old Testament translated 11 different Hebrew words into 1 Greek word "oinos", so the New Testament used "oinos" whether the drink was alcoholic or non-alcoholic. Therefore the context must determine which it means in each case.

B. There is reasonable proof that the "oinos" (translated "wine") at the wedding feast was non-alcoholic, and if this is true it affords no argument for social drinking of alcoholic beverages. Suppose the wine at the Cana wedding feast had been alcoholic, if they had devoured all that was on hand, and then Jesus made them a vast quantity of additional alcoholic wine which was so much better than usual wine (according to

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John 2:9,10), what would surely have happened to some of those in attendance? Some of them would have drunk themselves into drunkenness. No, Jesus would not have done anything that would have caused them to become drunken. I can't believe it.

C. Note--few people know just how much additional beverage Jesus made when He turned water into wine that day. There were six waterpots; each contained two or three firkins (John 2:6). Six waterpots containing two firkins apiece would be twelve firkins. Six containing three firkins apiece would be eighteen firkins. Now when we learn that a firkin was nine gallons, that would mean if those six waterpots held two firkins apiece Jesus made one hundred eight gallons of beverage, and if they held three firkins apiece He made one hundred sixty-two gallons! That much FREE wine that was pronounced super-good by the taster would surely produce some cases of drunkenness in Cana.

4. "But didn't Paul tell Timothy it would be all right for him to drink a little wine?"

In I Tim. 5:23 he told Timothy to take a little wine all right, but how and why? Was he condoning social drinking or advising Timothy medically? There is a great difference. Many medicines today have alcoholic bases, and none of us objects to taking medicine as needed. And the setting of the verse under consideration is that of a medical need ("for your stomach's sake and your often infirmity"). There is a difference between "taking a little" alcohol medically (do we give medicine by the "glass" or by the "spoonful"?) and drinking a beer, or two, or three! Note too that the fact that Paul told Timothy to do this shows he was not accustomed to drinking alcoholic beverages.

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5. "But wouldn't it still be all right for a moral, upright person in the community to drink socially as long as he didn't drink to excess?"

A. All admit that drunkenness is wrong. All must admit that many who intend only to drink moderate amounts actually give in little by little to become heavy drinkers and ultimately drunkards or alcoholics. If every person who drank socially ultimately became an out-and-out drunkard or alcoholic, many not lured into social drinking would have nothing to do with it. Who is it, then, who is drawing people into social drinking? It is those looked upon as moral people who drink but do not become alcoholics or drunkards. It is not bleery-eyed, vomiting, dirty drunkards who cause people to begin drinking. It is the socialite who does. And is there a Bible verse that applies here? Rom. 14:21: "It is good neither to eat flesh, nor to DRINK WINE, nor anything whereby thy brother stumbleth, or is offended, or is made weak." Those who are socially drinking but not becoming drunkards or alcoholics are actually the ones who are the stumbling blocks to those who take up drinking and later become alcoholics.

B. When you consider the fact that the known alcoholics in the U.S. today exceed the combined populations of Maine, New Hampshire, Vermont, Delaware, North Dakota, South Dakota, Montana, Idaho, Utah, Nevada, New Mexico, Alaska, and Hawaii (13 of our states!), it doesn't seem that we should have to argue with anybody about the folly of drinking any kind of alcoholic drinking. And when you consider that around one-half of our highway deaths today are in some way involved with alcoholic drinking, it is time that we become totally against any drinking of alcoholic beverages.

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QUESTIONS

1. Give an Old Testament verse that shows drunkenness to be wrong.
2. Give a New Testament verse for the same.
3. What possible danger does a social drinker subject himself to that a total abstainer does not face?
4. The King James Version translates the Greek word "asotia" as "excess". What different information on this Greek word was presented in the lesson?
5. What Greek word is translated "wine" in the New Testament?
6. How broad or general is this word in actual use?
7. What shows that the wine Jesus made at the wedding feast was not alcoholic?
8. How does I Tim. 5:23 not uphold the idea of social drinking?
9. How is Rom. 14:21 an argument against social drinking?
10. The known alcoholics in the U.S. today equal the combined populations of how many states?
11. How many of our highway deaths today are in some way related to alcoholic drinking?

The Ten Commandments

1. "The Ten Commandments are given twice in Moses' writings (Exo. 20 and Deut. 5). Why is this?"

A. The Exo. 20 listing was when the children of Israel first came out of Egypt. You will remember that that generation was forbidden to enter the promised land because of its unbelief.

B. After that original generation had died off, the lawgiver Moses rehearsed the law (including the Ten Commandments) to the new generation that had grown up during the generation spent in the wilderness. This is why the list is also found in Deut. 5. The word "Deuteronomy" means the "second giving of the law".

2. "Recount the giving of the Ten Commandments."

A. God first spoke orally from Mt. Sinai on that unforgettable day when the Israelites were called to the foot of the mount in order to hear the voice of God.

B. Then God called Moses up into the mount to receive these commandments chiseled in stone.

C. When coming down with the stone tablets forty days later, Moses found the people worshipping a golden calf. (He had been detained in the mount for more than a month writing down all the other laws by which the people were to be governed, thus causing the people to think he had died. Having known of God only through Moses' leadership, they idolatrously made them the golden calf to have something to worship.) Upon seeing the people in this idolatry he threw the stone tablets to the ground and they broke.

D. God commanded him to bring up two more stone tablets on which the commandments could again be written.

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E. When the ark of the covenant was made as one of the pieces of furniture for the tabernacle, these two stone tablets were put into it (Heb. 9:4).

3. "Is there any natural division of these commandments?"

A. Most Bible students divide the Ten Commandments into two groups: (1) the first four commandments (no other gods, no images, not to take God's name in vain, and remember the sabbath day) having to do with the Jews' attitude toward God; and (2) the last six commandments (honor parents, not to kill, not to commit adultery, not to steal, not to lie about another, and not to covet that which is another's) having to do with the Jews' duties to one another. This division is clear enough to be seen at a glance with the possible exception of the fourth commandment (the one about the sabbath). That commandment definitely belongs to the first group, for the sabbath was a special sign between God and Israel (Exo. 31:12,13).

B. It is this natural division that fits so well with Jesus' statement that the two great commandments were to love God with all one's heart and to love one's neighbor as himself (Matt. 22:36-40). Sometimes people think these two commandments were two of the Ten Commandments, but they were not. Instead they summarized the Ten Commandments and all the other laws. Notice the way that Paul summarized the last section of the Ten Commandments in the commandment to love one's neighbor (Rom. 13:8-10).

4. "Sometimes people say that all a person has to do to be saved is to keep the Ten Commandments. Is this right?"

A. No, we are not living under the covenant of which the Ten Commandments were a part.

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B. The Ten Commandments did not involve all the religious duties of the Jews who lived under that covenant. In addition to the Ten Commandments they had many laws to keep concerning sacrifices, feast days, tithing, civil laws, and many other things not found in the Ten Commandments.

C. The next time somebody says that all a person has to do to be saved is keep the Ten Commandments, ask him or her to name the Ten Commandments. In the majority of cases such people will get mixed up just trying to name them.

5. "You mentioned that we are no longer under the Ten Commandments. How is that?"

A. The law of Moses of which the Ten Commandments were a part was terminated at the cross (Col. 2:14).

B. Jesus announced in the Sermon on the Mount that He had come to fulfill the law, which would pass away with its fulfillment (Matt. 5:17,18).

C. Heb. 10:9,10 says Jesus took away the first will or covenant in order that He might establish the second (two wills would not be in effect at the same time). Therefore, the first covenant passed away in order that the second one (the new covenant) might go into effect. Since the new covenant went into effect fifty days after the resurrection (on the Day of Pentecost), the former covenant that contained the Ten Commandments had to be taken out of the way at least by that time.

6. "Does this mean it is all right to kill or steal since the Ten Commandments are done away?"

No, for those same commandments are found in various places in the New Testament. In one form or another all the Ten Commandments are found somewhere in

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the New Testament except the sabbath-commandment. God has retained of them what He wants.

7. "Don't the Seventh Day Adventists and other seventh-day bodies hold that the Ten Commandments are still in effect?"

A. They contend that the law of Moses ended at the cross except that part which was engraven on stone (the Ten Commandments). This position would perpetuate the sabbath-commandment.

B. But when Paul talks about the law having been done away, notice that he particularly mentions that part which was engraven on stone--the Ten Commandments (II Cor. 3:7,11). Col. 2:14 talks about the blotting out of ordinances, and he goes on to mention the sabbath (on the stones) along with the ceremonial laws (not on the stones). They have all been done away with by Christ!

C. But they do not really keep the sabbath themselves, for when the sabbath-law was in effect, they were forbidden to kindle a fire on that day (Exo. 35:3), but they do today. Furthermore, those who broke the sabbath were to be killed (Num. 15:32-36), yet they do not kill those who do not keep it.

In conclusion, let us be fully convinced that one cannot fulfill his divine obligations by merely keeping the Ten Commandments. If one can be saved by merely keeping the Ten Commandments, he can be saved without believing in Jesus, without loving God, without repenting, without controlling one's temper, without helping the needy, without loving one's mate, without being a good parent, without praying, and even while living the life of a drunkard, for there is not one word about any of these in the Ten Commandments. You can see then that the Ten Commandments were never given to be a complete guide to any people but were a group of important, easy-to-remember obligations for

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the Jews during Old Testament times.

QUESTIONS

1. In what 2 chapters are the Ten Commandments listed?
2. Why are they listed twice?
3. How long was Moses up in the mountain to receive these commandments in stone?
4. What wrong thing did the people do while he was gone?
5. After the tabernacle was made, where were the Ten Commandments kept?
6. Into what natural divisions do the Ten Commandments fall?
7. What is wrong with the teaching that all one has to do to be saved is keep the Ten Commandments?
8. Which 1 of the Ten Commandments is not found in the new covenant?

Questions about Salvation

1. "Was Saul of Tarsus saved on the road to Damascus? Was he saved in answer to prayer?"

A. The question, "When was Saul of Tarsus saved?" will too often be answered, "When Jesus appeared to him on the road to Damascus." Then others will answer, "He was saved in the city in answer to his three days of prayer."

B. Both are quite common ideas especially among those who claim visions today and those who believe that all one has to do to be saved is pray to God for salvation. It is true that Christ appeared to Saul as he neared Damascus, and that he spent three days in Damascus fasting and praying, but it can be conclusively shown from the book of Acts that Saul was not saved out there on the road nor in answer to his prayers in the city.

C. Open the Bible to the 9th chapter of Acts and read verses 1 through 12. All right, you have found in those verses the story of Jesus' appearance to him, Saul's question as to what he was to do, Christ's answer that in Damascus it would be told him, his blindness, his three days and nights in prayer without food or drink, and the call of Ananias to go to Saul at the end of the three days. Now if you will turn to Acts 22 and read verses 12 through 16, you will find Saul's own report of what happened when Ananias came to him. Having read these you have found that while Saul received his sight through Ananias's coming, yet the only thing Saul was told to do was to be baptized. Remember that out on the road Jesus said it would be told him what he was to do. He was not told to believe nor to repent. Why? Because he had already believed and was already sincerely penitent. But he had not been baptized. Therefore, he was told to do that. Now look at that 16th verse of Acts 22 again. Was Saul forgiven on the road? Was he forgiven in answer to his

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prayers? Or was he forgiven when he was baptized? It is obvious that he was yet in his sins when Ananias came, or he would not have said, "Arise, and be baptized, and wash away thy sins, calling on the name of the Lord." Therefore, he was not saved on the Damascus road, nor was he saved in answer to prayer.

2. "Did the baptism of the Holy Spirit revoke the sins of Cornelius and his household? Because they were baptized with the Holy Spirit before baptized in water, does that imply that we receive the Holy Spirit before baptism? Does Cornelius's baptism in the Holy Spirit argue that all converts are baptized in the Holy Spirit?"

A. You will find those who teach that baptism has nothing to do with salvation, for Cornelius and his household were baptized in the Holy Spirit before they were baptized in water. By such reasoning they imply that the purpose of the baptism of the Holy Spirit on the household of Cornelius was to revoke their sins or was proof that their sins were already forgiven.

B. But the Bible doesn't uphold such conclusions. Cornelius and those with him were not baptized in the Holy Spirit in order to forgive their sins. The baptism of the Holy Spirit was given to these Gentiles as God's sign to the Jewish Christians that Gentile believers should be baptized and fellowshipped as His people. Open your Bible to Acts 10 and read verses 44 through 48. From your reading you have found that those Jewish brethren who came with Peter were greatly surprised that God had poured out His Spirit on Gentiles. You saw that when Peter asked them if they would forbid his baptizing the Gentiles, there was no objection from them. Now turn to Acts 11 and read verses 1 through 18. These verses tell you that Peter met with opposition from the Jews when he returned to Je-

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rusalem. These verses go on to tell us that Peter rehearsed the whole story of his going to the Gentiles, concluding with the fact of their receiving the baptism of the Holy Spirit. Peter argued, "Forasmuch then as God gave them the like gift as he did unto us, who believed on the Lord Jesus Christ; what was I, that I could withstand God?" Peter understood, after all the preceding matters connected with the story, that this was the crowning proof that God wanted converted Gentiles to be admitted to the fellowship of the church also. Now when the ones at Jerusalem heard of their receiving Holy Spirit baptism, they too concluded that God was granting repentance unto life to the Gentiles also. Thus, the baptism of the Holy Spirit was not to forgive their sins but to open the way so they might be baptized even as the Jews and thereby procure salvation.

C. There are those who say that when people pray earnestly, God will give them the Holy Spirit, and that people should not be baptized in water until they are first baptized in the Holy Spirit. They point to Cornelius's case as proof that Holy Spirit baptism comes before water baptism. But since, as we have seen, that Cornelius's baptism in the Holy Spirit was a special event that does not attend the conversion of all sinners, the aforesaid reasoning is not valid. Open your Bible to Acts 2 and read verses 38 and 39. There Peter put repentance and baptism BEFORE receiving the Holy Spirit. "This promise," he said, "is unto you, and to your children (the Jews present on that day and their descendants), and to all that are afar off (the Gentiles--study Eph. 2:11-13), even as many as the Lord our God shall call."

D. The Bible shows that the gospel that is to be preached in all nations does not vary from nation to nation either in its facts, its commandments, or its promises.

QUESTIONS ABOUT SALVATION

3. "Were the Philippian jailer and his household baptized in the house? If so, doesn't that prove that they were not immersed? Weren't there infants baptized then since the whole household was baptized? Isn't faith the only thing required for salvation?"

A. Some say the jailer and his household were not immersed in the house. In our American way of living there have been numerous cases of immersion in people's own houses, some in large bathtubs and others in portable canvas tubs brought in. It is not likely, however, that the Philippian jailer had such equipment in his house. But this admission does not mean they were sprinkled or poured. Open your Bible to Acts 16 and read verses 25 through 34. In these verses you studied about the unusual experience in the jail at midnight, resulting in the jailer taking Paul and Silas to his home to learn of salvation. Notice especially verses 33 and 34: **after hearing their message** the jailer "took them the same hour of the night, and washed their stripes; and was baptized, he and all his, straightway." We are not told where he took them, where he washed their stripes, nor where they were baptized. But we are told in the next verse that after their baptism, he brought them INTO his house and set food before them. We know one thing for sure, they were not baptized in his house at all. Therefore, arguing that they could not have been immersed because of being baptized in his house is not to be considered.

B. Since his household was baptized, some have concluded that they have New Testament grounds for baptizing babies. They say, "Wouldn't there have been some babies in the household, and since the household was baptized wouldn't that give Scriptural grounds for infant baptism?" There could have been infants in that

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household, for many households include babies. But a household does not have to have infants. In fact there are many households that do not contain an infant. The question to be settled is, were there infants in the jailer's household? The Scripture shows there were no infants in his household. Open your Bible to Acts 16 and read verses 32 through 34. Did you notice in verse 32 that Paul and Silas taught the Word of God to all who were in the man's house? Did you notice in verse 34 that the man and all his house believed in God? These two statements show that everybody in this man's house was mature enough to be taught and to believe, so there were no infants in it.

C. "Faith-only" folks have long used the conversion of the jailer to substantiate their doctrine of salvation by faith-only. They say that faith is all that Paul said with reference to salvation. But such is not the whole truth. True, at the jail that was the only thing mentioned. But that is not where the story ended. Rather that is just where it began. Visualize the circumstances under which Paul spoke to this man about believing on the Lord Jesus Christ. This jailer lived in Europe where Paul had just arrived a few days earlier. He and Silas were the first gospel preachers to set foot in Philippi, as far as we know. Likely this jailer had never even heard of Jesus Christ. As a heathen he went to sleep hearing Paul and Silas singing and praying to their God. Being awakened by an earthquake in response to their prayers and being spared from taking his own life by the apostle Paul who might have fled the prison along with all the other prisoners, he asked what he must do to be saved. Paul told him salvation would come if he would believe on the Lord Jesus Christ. Suppose as a typical American I have a car wreck that mashes and mangles my body beyond hope of recovery. My loved ones hold out no hope that I will make it. But two Mormon missionaries stop and pray for my recovery. And to the amazement of

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everybody, even the doctors and the hospital, I snap out of it and recover. My relatives are convinced that the Mormons and their prayers were the determining factors in my recovery. They send for the missionaries and ask them, "What must we do to be saved?" If they answered, "You must believe in the Mormon religion," we would have a parallel to the jailer's experience. Believing in the Mormon religion would involve embracing it, and believing in the Lord Jesus involves accepting Him in surrender and obedience. They went home with the man and taught him, for "faith cometh by hearing" (Rom. 10:17). And when they taught him, you can see they taught him to be baptized, and its importance is seen in that they attended to it that very night even though it was in the late hours of the night (past midnight). And did you notice that there is no indication of the man's rejoicing until after he was baptized, and that after he was baptized it says he believed in God with all his house?

QUESTIONS

1. Prove from the Bible that Saul of Tarsus was not saved on the road to Damascus.
2. Prove from the Bible that he was not saved in answer to his prayers in Damascus.
3. Why was Cornelius and those with him baptized in the Holy Spirit?
4. Show that their receiving the Holy Spirit before baptism in water does not set a precedent for us today to be baptized in the Holy Spirit before we are baptized in water.
5. Show from the Bible that the jailer was not baptized in his house.
6. Show that there were no infants in his household.
7. Show that he was not saved merely by faith only.

The Indwelling Spirit

1. "Should we really believe that God's Spirit indwells Christians?"

Yes, it is a promise of the gospel just the same as the remission of sins. The same verse that promises remission of sins to those convicted believers who repent and are baptized likewise promises the gift of the Holy Spirit to the same people (Acts 2:38). And the next verse (v. 39) shows that the promise was not limited to those who heard Peter on that day but that the promise extends even to us today.

2. "Some say that the 'gift of the Holy Spirit' does not mean that a person receives the Holy Spirit but some gift from the Spirit, specifically eternal life. Is this true?"

It is not true when considered from related passages that show it is the Holy Spirit Himself who comes into a new convert and who indwells his or her Christian life. Acts 5:32 says God gives the Holy Spirit to those who obey Him. In fact God gives the Holy Spirit as a pledge (or "earnest" as it is called in the King James) ahead of time, assuring us that in due time He will fulfill His promise of everlasting life also (Eph. 1:13,14). Possibly the reasoning advanced by those who prefer thinking that it is a gift from the Holy Spirit that a convert receives is but man's attempt to deal with that which we do not fully understand. But we should not always deny what we cannot understand, or we, like the atheists, will even deny there is a God.

3. "How can a Christian person know he has the Holy Spirit?"

Let us compare the indwelling of the Holy Spirit

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within our lives and the presence of our own individual spirit within our body. How do we actually know that we possess our own spirit from God (compare Gen. 2:7; Eccl. 12:7)? Two ways: (1) God's Word informs us of that fact. Otherwise we wouldn't even know we are composed of both body and spirit. (2) The manifestation of our spirit's presence in the activities we perform. When a person is dead, he has all the faculties of his body, but he is dead because his spirit is gone (Jas. 2:26). In like manner do we know that we as Christians possess the indwelling Spirit of God: (1) We have God's Word for it (Acts 2:38,39; Acts 5:32; Rom. 8:9,11). (2) The spiritual manifestation of the indwelling Spirit in the spiritual activities performed. The love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, etc. that we see in a Christian person's life are actually the fruit of the Spirit (Gal. 5:22,23). Some people claim they can know they have the Spirit because they can feel it. Again let us make a helpful comparison. We cannot feel our own spirit's presence in our body. We believe we have a spirit because God teaches that we do, and we can see its manifestation in the fact that we are physically alive. And the same is true of the Holy Spirit. We can believe that we have the Spirit because God says we do, and we can see the manifestation of the Spirit in the fruit of our life. But you cannot locate either our human spirit or the Holy Spirit by feeling for such. The Bible nowhere says we feel the Holy Spirit within us. Now does it?

4. "How important is the indwelling Spirit?"

Very important. Both parts of the promise in Acts 2:38 are important (both remission of sins and the gift of the Spirit). We need the help of the Spirit after conversion to help us live the Christian life

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just as much as we need the remission of those sins committed before conversion. We need both the forgiveness of past sins and the help of the Holy Spirit for Christian living. There is nothing insignificant about the gospel, and one of the promises of the gospel is the indwelling gift of the Spirit!

5. "Please elaborate on the above point some more."

In Eph. 6:10 we are told to be "strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might." We are here instructed to be strong in our spiritual lives and in depending on the power of God to help us overcome the devil, for the following verse goes on to say, "Put on the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil." Then in v. 12 Paul explains, "For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places." If we wrestled only against flesh and blood, all we would need would be to be strong in our physical bodies, but since we are wrestling against strong evil forces of the spirit-world, we need to be more than flesh and blood--we need the special help of God to overcome these powerful forces. Rom. 8:13 shows that it is through the Spirit that we mortify (put to death) the wicked deeds of the body. I John 4:4 shows that we overcome the evil forces from without because "greater is he that is in you than he that is in the world". Who is in the Christian who is more powerful than the devil? The Holy Spirit of God!

In conclusion of this special study you will remember that Jesus said He is the vine and each follower a branch (John 15). When a branch is cut off from its vine, that branch dies because it is cut off from its life-giving sap. It is the sap within it that

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gives it life and makes it fruitful. In somewhat the same way the Holy Spirit within us gives us spiritual life and makes us fruitful.

Remember that if a person does not possess the Spirit, it is because he is not a child of God (Rom. 8:9).

QUESTIONS

1. What 2 blessings are promised in Acts 2:38?
2. What do some erroneously teach the gift of the Holy Spirit to be?
3. Cite a verse in which we are definitely promised the Holy Spirit Himself.
4. In what 2 ways do we know we have our own individual spirit in our bodies?
5. In what 2 similar ways do we know we have the Holy Spirit?
6. Can we feel either our own spirit or the Holy Spirit as proof that we have them?
7. How does Eph. 6 show that we need divine help in our lives?
8. The indwelling Holy Spirit is to the Christian's life like _____ is to a tree.

Verses about the Holy Spirit

1. "There are verses relating to the Holy Spirit that raise some questions. One is Acts 9:17 in which Ananias said, 'Brother Saul, the Lord, even Jesus, that appeared unto thee in the way as thou camest, hath sent me, that thou mightest receive thy sight, and be filled with the Holy Spirit.' We know he laid his hands on Saul even though Ananias was not an apostle. This is either a contradiction of what we have normally held (that the powers of the Holy Spirit were conferred only by the laying on of APOSTLES' hands), or it is an exceptional case. Which is it?"

Actually neither. Everything involved can be shown to be in harmony with what we have believed and preached about the Holy Spirit. Let us look at Ananias's coming to Saul.

A. Ananias stated the two purposes for which he came: (1) that Saul might receive his sight (which he had been without for three days); and (2) that Saul might receive the Holy Spirit. Now what two things did Ananias do to Saul to bring him these two blessings? (1) He laid his hands on Saul--this restored him his sight (Acts 9:12). (2) He baptized Saul--by this he received the indwelling Holy Spirit, the way and the time that converts receive the Holy Spirit (Acts 2:38, 39).

B. There are various ways Ananias could have stated his second purpose in coming. He could have said, "I am come that you might receive the forgiveness of your sins;" or, "That you might become a child of God;" or, "That you might be saved;" or, "That your name might be written in heaven;" or as Ananias did state it, "That you might receive the Holy Spirit." When one is baptized, all these things take place.

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Thus, all of them are important, and each of them might be used by a preacher in his remarks to those he is about to baptize.

To summarize, when Ananias laid his hands on Saul he received his sight, and when he baptized him Saul received the Holy Spirit, thus fulfilling the two-fold purpose of his coming to Saul and at the same time tying in the two blessings Saul received with the two things Ananias did to him.

2. "We have always taught that people receive the Holy Spirit when baptized and not by praying for that gift. But what do we say when Pentecostals and Charismatics cite Luke 11:13 ('If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children; how much more shall your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask him?')?"

There are two ways Jesus' statement might be taken both of which are harmonious with what we teach about the Holy Spirit.

A. Even though the apostles and those with whom they were assembling in Acts 4 were possessors of the Holy Spirit, verse 31 still says, "When they had prayed, the place was shaken where they were assembled together; and they were all filled with the Holy Spirit from baptism, but they were still urged to be "filled with the Spirit" (Eph. 5:18). This stirring up of the Spirit within them like one would stir up a fire that is already burning is connected with prayer. This could be one fulfillment of Luke 11:13.

B. Another possibility is equally an application of Luke 11:13--maybe even more so. Have you noticed to whom Jesus was speaking in Luke 11:13? In verse 1 the apostles requested that He teach them to pray. This is what called forth this particular teaching on prayer that closed with this special promise. If you will

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read both Matt. 7:7-11 and Luke 11:9-13, you will see that in both instances He taught that prayers will be answered, and He used the same illustrations in both passages. But the final verses (Matt. 7:11 and Luke 11:13) were different. To the multitude (His audience in Matt. 7:11) He said, "If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children, how much more shall your Father which is in heaven give good things to them that ask him?" while to the apostles in Luke 11:13 He said, "How much more shall your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask him?" Later in His ministry Jesus spoke more and more to His apostles about the Holy Spirit's coming upon them. Following His departure from them they were to tarry in Jerusalem to await the Holy Spirit's coming (Luke 24:49; Acts 1:8). What did they do in those days of waiting? "When they were come in, they went up into an upper room...These all continued with one accord in prayer and supplication" (Acts 1:13,14). In this viewpoint the praying in Acts 1:13,14 and the coming of the Holy Spirit upon them in Acts 2 combine for a fulfillment of Luke 11:13.

We are sure that Luke 11:13 is not meant to deny the means of receiving the Holy Spirit as set forth in Acts 2:38,39. Furthermore we see no apostle teaching an alien sinner to get down on his knees and pray that he might receive the Holy Spirit.

3. "Another verse that most of us could use some light on is Mark 16:17, where Jesus said, 'These signs shall follow them that believe.' Wouldn't them that believe include more than the apostles?"

A. Let us notice again that only the apostles were present when this promise was made. It was to them that Jesus said, "These signs shall follow them

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that believe." Had any of them ever failed to perform a miracle because of a lack of faith? Yes (see Matt. 17:14-20). So in giving them their final orders before His ascension Jesus reminded them that such power would follow only the labors of those who believed.

B. The need for Jesus to **emphasize** this to them at this particular time is seen in the earlier verses of this very chapter (Mark 16). Verse 11 shows that when Mary Magdalene reported to the apostles that Jesus was resurrected, they did not believe, and in verses 12 and 13 when the two Emmaus men reported to them that they had seen Jesus the apostles didn't believe them either. So when Jesus first appeared to the apostles, verse 14 says He "upbraided them with their unbelief and hardness of heart". Now can't you see why Jesus made particular mention of the fact that if they were going to perform miracles they must believe?

C. This promise in Mark 16:17 either means that every believer is to work miracles, or the promise is confined to those present (given to tell them on what condition they would be allowed to perform miracles). The first cannot be true (according to I Cor. 12:29, 30) while the latter position is (according to what we have just considered).

QUESTIONS

1. For what 2 purposes did Ananias go to Saul?
2. What 2 things did Ananias do to Saul to fulfill those 2 purposes?
3. What are the 2 possible understandings of Luke 11:13?
4. Why doesn't Mark 16:17 mean that every believer is to work miracles?
5. Why did the apostles need Jesus to emphasize the faith-aspect of working miracles?

Why We Suffer

1. "When a person gets sick, some people say it was just to be; others say he has done something wrong; still others say sin had nothing to do with it. How about it?"

This is a big question, a question that many people are considering today. There are different reasons why people may be suffering.

- A. Sometimes it may be due to sin.
- B. Other times it is not.

2. "What would be some examples of a person suffering because of sin?"

- A. Drinking can bring on many natural afflictions.
- B. So can the use of tobacco.
- C. Venereal and similar diseases often come upon those who have not behaved themselves morally.
- D. One who gets into a fist fight may end up with his nose broken.
- E. Another way to suffer because of one's sins is when God sees fit to chasten in a physical way.

3. "Well why would a person suffer when he or she has committed no sin to bring it on?"

A. He might suffer as a result of a mistake he made (hitting his finger with a hammer, stepping out in front of a car unwittingly, drinking poison by accident, etc.). All these would be mistakes but not sins.

B. He might suffer because of the mistakes of others (being struck by a reckless driver, having a doctor give him the wrong medicine, a child's health affected because his mother did not take care of herself while carrying him before birth, etc.).

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C. He might suffer as a result of the sins of others (an innocent man being stabbed by a wicked person, a drunken father beating his wife or children, etc.).

4. "Isn't it wrong that we are called on to suffer because of the sins and mistakes of others?"

A. When God put life on the earth, He could have put every person on an island by himself so that every person would have a sort of Robinson Crusoe existence. Instead He set up life on the earth in which people live together.

B. It is true that this living together brings a few misfortunes to us, but those misfortunes caused by others are far outweighed by the blessings we derive from living among others. You sit down to eat your breakfast, but the orange juice you drink was raised, processed, and transported to you--by others. The cereal you eat, you didn't grow the wheat for it. You didn't grow the sugar that you put on it. You didn't produce the milk on it. You didn't make the bowl you eat out of nor the table you eat from nor the chair you are sitting on while eating. It is true you had to buy these things, but if others didn't live and produce and manufacture these products, you couldn't buy them.

C. Yes, we suffer sometimes because of others, but we benefit so much more because of others. Wouldn't you rather live among people and occasionally have to suffer some because of them than to be shipped off to some remote island to live by yourself where you would never suffer because of others? Wouldn't you?

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5. "Isn't some suffering more or less natural? Isn't some sickness just a part of life and in no special way traceable to anything or anybody?"

There are at least three ways in which general suffering may not indicate any sin on our part or on the part of anybody else:

A. The human race is not as strong nor as long-lived as it once was. We are all mortal in our bodies, and anything subject to death is surely subject to suffering before death. No doubt we suffer at times just because we are human.

B. Then there are those catastrophes that hit and leave much general suffering behind such as floods, fires, tornadoes, and epidemics.

C. Finally there is suffering that comes because of the invariableness of nature. For instance, there is the law of gravity. What a blessing it is, yet every injury from falling is a result of that invariable law of nature. We cannot turn the law of gravity off and on just to suit whatever will be best for us at the time. It works all the time, and we must cooperate with it. Otherwise we will suffer. Again, water seeks its own level. What a blessing that it does! Otherwise after a rain a farmer would not get into his field in the springtime to put in his crop. Every bit of water that fell would lie right where it fell until it all evaporated. Because water seeks its own level consistently is why we have floods that can cause such damage and suffering. Then God has created the sense of pain in our physical bodies, and because of this we know what suffering is. On all these things let us realize that blessings come to us because of the invariableness of nature. If God would suspend the law of gravity, the food we are about to eat would fly off our table. If water didn't seek its own level, our power plants on the rivers would not give us our con-

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stant flow of electricity. If God hadn't given us a sense of pain, it wouldn't be long until the human family would be extinguished. For instance, one would have his hand on a stove that is hot, and it could burn off before he knew it if he had no sense of pain to tell him to remove his hand immediately. He gets tired and feels his need of sleep and rest. If he were not so constituted, he would keep going and going and going without any warning that he was in need of re-fueling his strength and energies through rest that he would kill himself off.

As we stated at the outset, this is indeed a big subject. The above material does not answer everything about it, but it does shed some rays of light upon it.

QUESTIONS

1. What different views are held with reference to why people suffer?
2. Cite examples of suffering resulting from sinning.
3. Cite examples of suffering because of one's own mistakes.
4. Cite examples of suffering because of the mistakes of others.
5. Why should we suffer some because of the mistakes of others?
6. Show that some suffering is just natural.

Older People

1. "Is it a tragedy to get old?"

A. This is the view of the world, and we can see why. The unsaved are walking by sight and not by faith, and from all appearances there is very little left for them. All they can say is, "The evil days have come, and I have no pleasure in them" (compare Eccl. 12:1). And they have no hope for eternity.

B. But old age is not a tragedy to the Christian, for he looks at everything differently, walking by faith and not by sight (II Cor. 5:7). Paul did not fear death but realized that to die was to depart and be with the Lord which he knew to be far better than remaining in this life (see Phil. 1:21,23). Especially in view of this, "the path of the just is as the shining light, that shineth more and more unto the perfect day" (Prov. 4:18).

2. "Does old age have any compensations?"

A. The compensation of honor and respect. Prov. 16:31 says, "The hoary head (white hair) is a crown of glory, if it be found in the way of righteousness." Old age is not something to fear unless one is not right with God. Older age brings a certain community-respect because of having dwelt honorably in it for so long. Good people seem to get better with the advancement of age. It is a great honor to be a righteous older person. On the other hand there is nothing more disgusting than a wicked older person: hard-hearted, foul language, tobacco-chewer, etc. Nobody has respect for such a person, and but few tears are shed when he dies.

B. The compensation of grandchildren and great grandchildren. Prov. 17:6 says, "Children's children (grandchildren) are the crown of old men." Jacob, so aged in Egypt, rejoiced that God had permitted him to

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live to see Joseph's children (Gen. 48:11). Children dearly love to go to their grandparents, and grandparents are usually as fond of them unless they are too undisciplined, noisy, and destructive.

C. The compensation of recollection. Their memory can reach clear back to childhood, and they enjoy talking of olden times. Younger people need to be more patient with the reminiscing of older people. Youth will do well to listen to the experiences and advice of older people. You will remember that older men gave Rehoboam sound advice that he did not accept, and the kingdom divided immediately (I Kings 12:6-8).

3. "Is it hard to win older people to Christ?"

It is a proven fact that very few older people ever accept the Lord. You would think the nearer a person draws to eternity the easier it would be to touch him for Christ. But such is not usually the case. People become set in their ways and bound to their ideas. People get tired mentally and emotionally as well as physically. This often accounts for the difficulty in reaching them. How we should rejoice when we see an older person turn to the Lord, and occasionally some do.

4. "What advice is there for dealing with an older person?"

I. Tim. 5:1 says, "Rebuke not an elder, but intreat him as a father." A study of the first two verses of this chapter will show that it is talking about an older man and not the office of elder. It says not to deal with an elderly man in a rebuking way but in an entreating way. Experience has proven the rightness of this divine psychology, which it is. One will seldom get very far with an older person administering an

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outright rebuke, but to sit down and entreat him will often go very far toward the desired results. Married children keeping an elderly father in the home need to keep this in mind. And preachers and other personal workers need to keep this in mind also.

5. "What about the all-too-common tendency of children to neglect the needs of their aged parents?"

Nothing too stern can be said about it. It is a practice contrary to the teachings of Christianity. Often there comes that time in life when the older must look to the younger generation for care. When aged parents need financial assistance, one is actually a denier of the faith who will not provide for his own. This is the very setting of I Tim. 5:8. Children are to "requite" (pay back) their parents and thereby show "piety" (religion) at home (I Tim. 5:4). Children ought to do everything in their power to make their parents' last years easy and happy. Children will borrow money to buy a new car or to go on a vacation but may not borrow the money to add an extra room on to their house to make room for an aged mother or father. This is not right. The Pharisees fell under a severe condemnation of Jesus because they would not take care of their parents (Matt. 15:4-7). If parents prefer going to a rest home or a nursing home for their last years, that is all right, but some of them prefer making their home with their children when they can no longer take care of themselves, and there are too many cases where children just don't want to be bothered with older people, so they ship them off against their wishes. But even before parents get to such an age, children often neglect them by not writing to them regularly and by not going to see them. They go other places, but they do not go see their aged parents. They keep books on their business, but they don't

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write a letter home. Such is heartless and inconsiderate, and we can but say that the time may come when they too will be old and will be treated the same way by their own children. Then they will realize what an injustice their thoughtlessness did to their own parents years before.

QUESTIONS

1. What is the attitude of the world about getting old?
2. What makes a Christian's viewpoint of old age different?
3. What are some compensations for getting older?
4. Why is it harder to win older people to Christ?
5. How are we to deal with an older person?
6. What does the Bible say about neglecting aged parents?

