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Can You Answer This?

Questions Youth Are Asking Today



by C. Mervyn Maxwell

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DID GOD MAKE JESUS DIE?

Question. The guy I am going with is a church member and he wants me to join a church too. I'd like to, but my hang-up is this thing about worshipping a God who made His Son die on a cross. I don't get it.

Answer. God didn't "make" Jesus die. Jesus himself said, "No one takes it [My life] from Me, but I lay it down of My own accord." See John 10:18, RSV. Jesus wasn't drafted; He was a volunteer.

SHOULD MEDICS HELP WOUNDED SOLDIERS?

Question. I notice your writers really praise Army medics who don't carry guns in wartime. It looks like hypocrisy to me. What's the difference between killing enemy soldiers and healing a wounded infantryman so he can kill them? I say Christ would have nothing at all to do with war.

Answer. Suppose your wounded infantryman is about to be returned home to be the sole support of his five little children and crippled old grandmother? Now should the medic run to help him?

If we always stop to ask, "Is the man who needs me a good man or a bad man?" we will never help anyone; but Jesus taught us in the story of the Good Samaritan that our neighbor is anyone who happens to be in need.

Christ healed thousands of afflicted people; was this the same as if He personally committed all the sins that those people committed after they were well again?

What the wounded man does when he is well is his responsibility. What we do when he is in pain and asks us to help him is our responsibility.

WHAT TO DO ON SABBATH

Question. Since becoming a Sabbath keeper a few months ago, I have found the day a real blessing, just as the minister said I would. But it's quite a trial for my eight-year-old boy to sit and do nothing all Sabbath afternoon. Can you help me?

Answer. In the Ten Commandments the Sabbath is presented as a reminder of creation—and this is the clue you need.

Most eight-year-olds love nature—not in the abstract, mind you, but in the round, and if possible, in the hand, alive and wiggling. Monkeys, tadpoles,

turtles, toads—what a help they are to young Sabbath keepers!

My wife and I often take our ten-year-old to some small nearby park in good weather or to the zoo in bad weather, or stay home sorting and labeling his rocks and shells, and other collections. It isn't just nature study though; now and then we casually remind each other that the God who made all these fascinating things made us too and is wise enough to answer our prayers, and so on.

Our lad tells us he loves the Sabbath, and so do the boy and the girl next door whom we often invite to go with us.

CRIPPLED JOB SEEKER

Question. Before I graduated from college, I prayed so hard I'd get a certain job in California. I told God I was crippled—I'm sure He knew it already!—and that I so much wanted to get away from the Midwest winters.

Well, I got the job. The company even paid to move me out West. But in a short time the foreman turned against me, and now I've been fired! I'm trying to believe God is leading me, but I'm terribly confused.

Answer. The Bible says, "In all thy ways acknowledge Him, and He shall direct thy paths." Proverbs 3:6. God will continue to lead you, as you do your part. He knows you need to eat. See Matthew 6:25-33. Soon you will have another job, one you will like much better. Then you will say, "God found me the first job just to get me to California. From that job He led me to the one He had in mind all along."

SECOND ADVENT NOT ALL HAPPINESS

Question. I think all this talk about the return of Christ as a "glorious hope" and all that is too dumb for words. Maybe I'll be one of those "wicked" who are going to get burned up at the second coming. I don't want to burn.

Answer. Some aspects of the second coming God Himself doesn't like either. "As I live," says the Lord, in Ezekiel 33:11, RSV, "I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked." Then He goes on to plead, "Turn back, turn back from your evil ways; for why will you die?"

In the words of Paul, "We are ambassadors for

Christ, God making His appeal through us. We beseech you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God." 2 Corinthians 5:20, RSV.

WHO WANTS TO GO TO HEAVEN?

Question. Who really wants Jesus to come soon and "take us home to heaven"? Heaven sounds too blah for me. I like it where I am, here in the good old world.

Answer. The Bible pictures heaven as a real place where people will eat food, wear clothes, live in houses, travel widely, enjoy friendships, and carry on a multitude of pursuits, much as people do here and now. See Isaiah 65:17-25.

It also presents heaven as a place where we will never get sick or die (Revelation 21:4), nor ever go to war (Isaiah 65:25).

I certainly hope Jesus comes before I die, and sometimes I wish He would come before I catch the flu again. On second thought, wouldn't you like Him to come before you have to join the Army and go off to war?

GETTING READY FOR HEAVEN

Question. Sure, I'd like to go to heaven, but it seems like it costs more than it's worth. Who wants to make like a goody-goody all his life? I want to have some fun.

Answer. If you will let Him, Jesus will so change you that you will actually want to be good. Jesus called this change a new birth. See John 3. Paul said that the person who makes his decision for Christ becomes an entirely new person. See 2 Corinthians 5:17. After experiencing such a change himself Paul said that he was experiencing so much more happiness now than before that he considered his former life—a remarkably successful one by many standards—no better than refuse by comparison. See Phillipians 3:4-11.

I have heard of many people who in the closing moments of their lives have expressed the regret that they had never become Christians; I have never heard of anyone in that serious moment who expressed a regret that he had become one.

Living "for Christ" and "for others" is much more broadening and satisfying than living merely "for oneself." I sincerely recommend that you try it. Then you will not only enjoy heaven when the time comes; you will enjoy having heaven in your life here and now.

LEARNING TO FORGIVE OTHERS

Question. Last week I learned that someone had said something totally untrue about me behind my back. I have tried to forgive him, but I can't seem to do it. Can you help me?

Answer. Indeed I can.

Jesus told us to "pray for those who persecute" us. Matthew 5:44, RSV. Praying for someone can work wonderful changes in our feelings toward him.

I was in college during World War II. An older

friend I respected astounded me by writing the draft board nearest my college and offering assumed evidence that I was a draft dodger. Fortunately I was not registered with that draft board. Unfortunately I became very disgusted with this former friend.

Then I heard someone say that we ought to pray for this particular person; that he was going through a spiritual crisis and needed all the help people could give him.

I was amazed. *He* was undergoing temptation? *He* needed my help? It was a new thought to me. I went to my dormitory room and knelt and prayed for him. When I got up again, I found that I had an entirely different attitude toward him.

When you ask God to forgive a person, it becomes a lot easier for you to forgive him.

You Can Trust the Bible

(Continued from page 15)

modern research among the ancient manuscripts of the Bible shows that actually we are quite uncertain about the authenticity of a large share of the Biblical text. The writer referred particularly to an enormous research project now in progress on both sides of the Atlantic, with headquarters at Oxford University and the Southern California School of Theology.

The purpose of this vast endeavor is to recheck completely the sources of the New Testament text in the thousands of Greek manuscripts, the early versions, and the writings of the early fathers of the church. I have watched friends of mine at work on this project—and very tedious but thorough work it is.

After more than fifteen years of labor, the first volume of this international critical text of the Greek New Testament is soon to be published. The results will hardly be those mentioned in the magazine article, but rather they will provide further evidence of the remarkable preservation of the Scriptural text.

Meanwhile, the united Bible Societies of America, Scotland, Württemberg, and the Netherlands have just published a critical edition of the Greek New Testament "specially adapted to the requirements of Bible translators throughout the world." In a most convenient form the more important variations in the Greek text are listed in the footnotes, together with the available evidence supporting each different reading.

I wish all could read these footnotes, see the nature of the variants, and sense the candor with which the problems have been spread out on the page. No secrets here. Just an honest desire to reproduce the wording of the Bible documents with ever greater accuracy—down to the last detail.

I wish everyone could take each listed variant and try it out in the printed text above. Ask yourself if any of these could possibly affect in a significant way the consistent witness of the Scriptures to the truth about God.

You can trust the words.

For all practical purposes we have in our possession the books of the Bible as they were originally written. [END]