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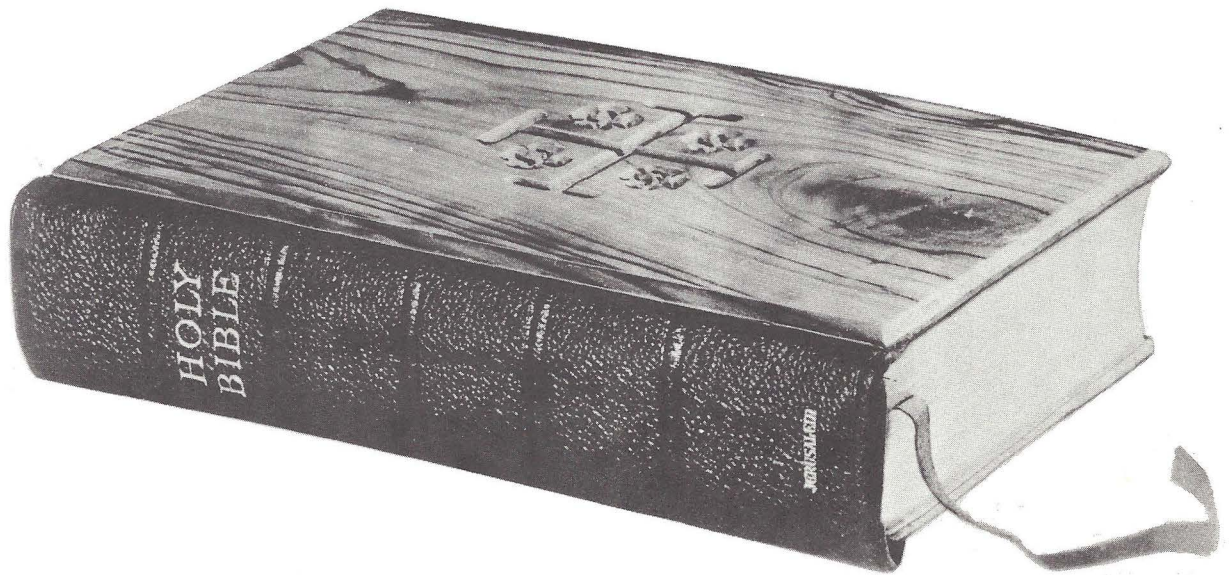
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And many other signs truly did Jesus in the presence of his disciples, which are not written in this book: but these are written, that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that believing ye might have life through his name.

John 20; 30-31

SEVEN FACETS OF THE BIBLE REVELATION NUMBER 193

A BOOK OF ANSWERS

What is God?

What is Man?

What are Good and Evil?

What is Holiness?

What is Faith?

What is Judgment?

What About Immortality?

Affirmation

BELOVED CENTURION:

I have told you that the Bible can be a guide in your life. This lesson, which is the 4th in the series, we have called A BOOK OF ANSWERS, and to the very best of the ability of your Instructor you have been given the answers to many questions; one of the most important of which is the question of Faith - just what it is and how it can be developed.

And, then, we discuss with you in this lesson the difference between good and evil. We give you a definition of holiness, which I believe will come as a surprise, and I feel sure that it will be an interesting discovery. Then there is an explanation of what we mean by heaven. We also explain to you which is correct, "God is Spirit", or "God is a Spirit". There is a vast difference in meaning.

This lesson is one which you should read thoughtfully, not just once but several times, for it can have a far-reaching effect in your life and in your happiness. You will find that what you are - what you will be in the future - rests, for the most part, with you, yourself.

When you decided to become a Mayan, there was a reason. You were not satisfied with your life. You wanted better things. You wanted happiness, good health, peace and contentment of mind.

Most of all you wanted to gain knowledge. You wanted to know more about yourself. "Know thyself", means simply this - that you learn what you know and what you can do. A famous philosopher said that "Knowledge is power", but, really, mere knowledge is not power. Doing something about what you know, is power. In other words, action, directed by knowledge, is power.

This is why there is a great deal more to your study of Mayanry than just learning. You must also "do". Knowledge is power in the same sense that wood is fuel. If you put the wood on the fire, it is fuel. Knowledge, on fire with purpose, is power.

Our purses can be stolen. Our worldly goods may be destroyed and taken from us, but we cannot be robbed of knowledge; therefore, an investment in knowledge always pays the best interest. I feel sure, if you look back on the day that you entered your study of Mayanry and compare the knowledge you had then with what you have now, you will find you have come far on the path. Human learning, with the blessing of God upon it, introduces us to Divine wisdom; and while we study the works of Nature, in an effort to gain knowledge, the God of Nature will manifest himself to us.

Never be content with what you know. Be ever searching and reaching out for the answers to the deep and hidden mysteries of life. In this way, your character unfolds. You are at a very important stage in your studies. Perhaps you feel it as do I, your instructor. Resolve to get the utmost from your studies.

Repeat with me the words of the following Prayer:

PRAYER

Heavenly Father, my heart is always seeking the answers to deep, reaching questions about eternal things. As I meditate on the searching words of the Holy Book let me find the eternal answers. Amen.



A BOOK OF ANSWERS

PART I - WHAT IS GOD ?

WE shall touch this question again when we discuss the divine revelation in the last lesson of this series. But let us at least begin the consideration of it now to lay a foundation for other questions and answers to follow.

Naturally a great deal is said about God in the Bible, but not much of it has been by way of definition. The idea seems to be, as in the writing of a story, that all we need to know about a character is revealed in what he says and does. Ordinarily, that is true, but knowing the Divine seems to call for at least one clear, direct, dependable definition.

We have it on the occasion of the meeting of Jesus with the Samaritan woman at Jacob's well. The woman, discussing worship, as someone is doing somewhere all the time, said something showing that she had a very inadequate idea of either God or worship. Jesus felt it necessary to explain why neither God nor worship can be localized in space. He used a sentence which in the older Bible versions has been rendered, "God is a spirit". Later translators have felt that the indefinite article does not belong there, nor does any article at all. They have rendered it "God is spirit".

That makes all the difference in the world. Instead of a spirit, moving about, present in only one place at a time, it recognizes God as Spirit, all-pervading, everywhere present, and everywhere the same. Therefore, since God is Spirit, He must be worshiped in spirit if He is to be worshiped in truth.

The word Spirit comes from a Latin word meaning breath, or, to breathe; in other words, something like air. Jesus told Nicodemus it is like the wind, blowing where it will, yet impossible to locate.

It was this understanding concept of God St. Paul had in mind when he explained to a group of Athenian scholars that "in him we live, and move, and have our being." God is everywhere in the universe, just as air is everywhere in the world of man, and water is everywhere in the world of a fish. Neither man nor fish can get away from that in which he lives, and moves, and has his being. Moses suggested the same idea when he addressed God as "our dwellingplace in all generations."

Spirit is no lifeless, empty, powerless thing. God is a Personality because the essence and elements of personality are spiritual qualities. He is not a kind of Superman, but Infinite Spirit expressing itself in infinite love, power, wisdom, goodness, and creativeness. Whatever your struggles with the question have been, when you have thought the Master's definition through you will have become newly acquainted with God. You will have found a practical idea of a possible God with whom you can work and whose qualities you can build up within yourself, especially since you can see them demonstrated in the life of Jesus.

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PART II - WHAT IS MAN?

“WHAT is man that thou art mindful of him?” asked the Psalmist, and into his relaxed consciousness flowed the answer. Man is a being whom God has created only a little lower than the angels, and crowned with glory and honor. If man would have anything like the respect for himself that God has for him, - not arrogance or egotism, but respect - he would never wear his crown of glory and honor boastfully, but he would scorn anything that would tarnish it or debase his majesty.

Man is a prince because he is a child of the King. "So God created man in his own image", says the writer of Genesis. Man is not only a child of God, but as is to be expected, he bears the family likeness. We cannot be like God in the body, for He is Spirit; but we can, and are supposed to be like Him in personality, attitude, spirit, and purpose.

We must remember that when, in or out of the Bible, God is referred to in terms of the human body or any part of it, that is only to help beings like us to understand. It is called anthropomorphism, or changing God into the form of man, and is not to be taken literally. We must remember that we must make no image of Him who is Spirit and that our likeness to Him is at a higher level than face or form.

A child may look like his human father first because he has the same nature and second because he may be like him mentally and emotionally. Man was created with certain elements of God's nature, such as the power to think, choose, decide, love, forgive, and create. This family likeness is deep inside us where our spiritual attitudes dwell. Man is the uplooking one. He loves the hills, the clouds, and the stars. Earthiness pulls down, while divinity reaches up. Man has both capacities within him, and the one that wins is the one he is most interested in.

A great thinker has said that evolution, meaning the continued development of man to his richest and finest selfhood, is the spirit always trying to free itself from the trammels of the flesh. We too often find, as did Jesus in Gethsemane, that the spirit is willing, but the flesh is weak.

In the Thirteenth Chapter of First Corinthians, Revised Version, St. Paul says that now we see ourselves in a mirror darkly, but the time will come when we will know ourselves as we are known. Our problem now is not so much to know others as it is to know ourselves, to overcome the tendency to forget the dignity of our

royalty and the honor of our divine sonship. It is too easy to lower our standards when we cease to feel the upward pull of spirit.

We are warned in the Bible that man is not to think more highly of himself than he ought to think. Of course there is also danger in the opposite extreme, when we forget that we are created only a little lower than the angels. Humility and self-respect will mix well if we do not let one weigh too much more than the other. The weight of a crown of glory and honor should make it even easier to kneel, and kneeling in no way discredits the crown.

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PART III - WHAT ARE GOOD AND EVIL?

THE question of good versus evil is as old as the human race. Countless and endless theories have been offered, countless and endless systems of ethics have been devised, and countless and endless debates have been carried on, most of them more academic than practical, as to what good and evil are and what is the difference between them. The most understandable and usable answers to the question are brief and simple, and they rise less from desire for intellectual approval and more from the wish to do the will of God. Answers of this latter kind are at their best in the Bible.

The patriarchs were men of conscientious ways, and their lives are marked by constant and constructive efforts to be just and right. When Moses concentrated his elaborate system of divine law at Sinai it probably reflected many conceptions of right-doing and just-dealing that had long been practiced, even in the days before Noah and Abraham.

Even Moses told Israel that there was a simpler way. On one occasion he admonished the tribes to love the Lord God with all their hearts, all their souls, and all their might. On another occasion he proclaimed that they should love their neighbors as themselves. Long afterward Jesus brought these twin principles together in what He called the Great Commandment. One who rightly obeys it will not go wrong. It is a key to the solution of the whole complex matter.

With the passing of the centuries the ideas of good and evil grew more voluminous and complicated. In what seems a mood of holy impatience the Prophet Micah simplifies the whole matter in his familiar and inclusive formula, "He hath showed thee, O man, what is good; and what doth the Lord require of thee, but to do justly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God?"

Jesus brought a new and deeper conception of what is good, and therefore opposite to evil. He recognized the law as a beginning, but scorned making goodness a technical thing. The sum of it, He indicated, is an attitude of goodness, a law written on the heart. At the same time His conception of goodness was so high that He would not even allow Himself to be called good.

He said only God is good, but at the same time demanded that we be perfect as God is perfect. Notice that He did not say as good as God, but as perfect. Goodness and perfection are two different things. Goodness is a fixed standard. Perfection is the best any given person can do to attain it. Goodness is constant.

Perfection develops and grows. Goodness is an ultimate goal. Perfection is our approach to date. Study the derivations of the words and you will see what is meant.

The new world life of righteousness pictured at the close of the Book of Revelation is the final success of the Spirit of God in bringing to harvest the good planted in human life. Laws and ethical ideas will have helped, but only as they will have reached and inspired the inner life of mankind. The good life is a kind of contagion. It needs to become epidemic. The more carriers we can have, the faster it will spread. You, as a Mayan, can be a carrier, and several thousand other members acting as carriers can be a tremendous force for good.

Good is what makes welfare and happiness, and evil is what wrecks them. Good builds, and evil tears down. Good saves, and evil destroys. That is the difference. The choice should be clear.

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PART IV - WHAT IS HOLINESS?

WHILE we are talking about good seems the best time to proceed to the thought of that super-good called holiness. We need to do this because the word is widely misunderstood and in such a way as to make it seem forbidding and to cause many to miss the value by missing the meaning. We are told that God, the angels, and certain people, are holy, and that anyone can be if he is willing to meet the standard and pay the price. That is all true, but how, and why?

The word Holy, in various forms, appears continually in the Bible. When we realize what the word means the nature of the quality becomes clear, so we can see how natural a thing it is, and the way to it becomes plain. It is no morbid or extreme attitude. It is not anything attained by formula, and certainly not by simply claiming it. It is a normal status of life, being followed by many people, and available to all who are not now living in the way the Creator intended.

Holiness is not a theological term at all. It is rather a word applying to good sense and the kind of conduct to which it aspires. It simply means wholeness or completeness, both of which mean health, which in turn means rightness of condition and way of living. In our accounts of the healing miracles of Jesus we are usually told that the sick person was made whole. On one occasion many people touched His garment, and as many as did so were made perfectly whole. Holy is simply a word for complete health of body and soul.

By usage the word Holiness has come to be applied only to spiritual health, the form whole or Wholly being applied only to physical well-being. This is a needless division of the idea of wholeness. Either form of the word, by its very meaning, applies to the whole self. Have you not seen health of body contribute to health of spirit, and have you not seen ailing people begin to improve when their spiritual attitudes were set right? And of course it works the other way too. The lack of health also applies to the entire being where it prevails at all.

Holiness or wholeness implies a life in which no normal phases of character or personality remain undeveloped, or are allowed to be less than their best. The

details of interest, talent, or accomplishment may vary; but holiness, wholeness, or wholesomeness, requires that all God-given phases of life are to be developed and used to the best possible purpose.

The Bible has a perfect pattern for this too in no less a case than that of the Master Himself. There is no question about the growth and development of the Holy One. We are told that through His youth and early manhood He was advancing in wisdom, and in stature, and in favor with God and man. This was His pattern of wholeness - growth to completeness in mind, body, godliness, and human relationships. Along these lines the holiest life was built. How normal and inevitable they are, and how possible it is for anyone to follow them!

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PART V - WHAT IS FAITH?

IN the opening pages of the Bible we begin to see evidences of faith and its high importance in the living of life. In Abraham we find one of the greatest faith cases on record, one so distinctive that it caused him to be known many centuries afterward as The Father of the Faithful, because he believed God.

Read again thoughtfully the Eleventh Chapter of Hebrews. Meditate, perhaps repeatedly and often on the first three verses. Then go on to the majestic instances of faith listed - Abel, Enoch, Noah, Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Joseph, Moses, Joshua, Rahab. Then from the Thirty-second Verse to the end of the Chapter think, again reverently, of Gideon, Barak, Samson, Jephthae, David, Samuel, and the prophets who also through faith subdued kingdoms and wrought righteousness.

We must remember that between and among these monumental instances are countless, nameless cases of humble people who also won victory in the simple but important affairs of their daily lives, and by means of faith kept their lives on a high level and achieved their own particular triumphs through honest obedience as they too believed God. No life lived in faith is ordinary.

Usually definitions are not a great deal of practical help, because there is danger that they may lead us away from practice into theory, thus substituting an effort to understand a thing for an effort to do it. The author of the Letter to the Hebrews gives us a definition of faith that is an exception. Think it over and put it into practice. It may seem something of a mystery till one has had some experience with it. It does, however, throw enough immediate light on the meaning of the word at least to show us how and where to begin.

The definition is familiar, but it is profound enough always to bear another repetition - Faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen. In other words, faith is a power by which hope is actualized, manifested visibly and usably. It is also an inner evidence that things not seen are the potentialities of things visible, the means by which they can be made real. Think this over very carefully, and you will see more and more that you have a miracle-working power at your disposal, by means of which you can work together with God to accomplish almost any good thing. (If you do not have a copy of The Miracle Power, which can be a big help to you in this series of lessons, the new edition, cloth bound, can be obtained at your Mayan Book House).

not on the soul.

The glorious thing about judgment is that it also works the other way. It is as free with its compensations as it is with its penalties. God's law of cause and effect also assures us of full reward for every wise and worthy thing we do, attitude we assume, or motive we cherish. It is life's certified accountant. It stands as ready to make an entry to our credit as to enter a charge against us.

So far as each of us is concerned the renderings of the law of judgment are for us to determine. It is always prepared to deliver its rewards according to the choices we make, and there are no limits. Time and nature will heal a burn on the knee, but it takes the power of God to heal a wound on the soul. Fortunately, that power is available too.

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PART VII - WHAT ABOUT IMMORTALITY?

SOME may say at the outset that we are here discussing something no one knows anything about. Yes, and no. No one now living on the earth knows anything about it by physical experience, but there are other ways in which we may, and many do, know something about it.

Anyone traveling a road can look ahead and see, at least dimly, where he is yet to arrive. If he stays on that road and keeps going in the same direction, he can be certain of an ultimate closer view. Anyone can take what facts he has, what assurances men of vision have given us, what the inspired record says, what his subconscious intuition tells him, what his instinctive longings are, and above the meaning of the empty tomb on resurrection day, and proceeding from the known to the unknown, can make up his mind to a great deal.

We cannot here go into the details of all the ideas about how gold-paved streets, crowns and harps, and eternal idleness on the one hand, and lakes of fire and brimstone on the other, ever got into the picture, however interesting and informing that might be. We have only time and space to suggest the general law of the survival of personality so plainly indicated in the New Testament and especially in the teachings of Jesus.

We gather that since God is a perfect Father, man was created to be happy, and ample provision was made to keep him so. On the other hand, man, being a free agent, has made much unhappiness for himself by failing to know what happiness is or to do what will attain it. The road to happiness was set before him at the beginning; but, thinking it too straight and narrow to suit his fancy, he built other roads and learns, often too late, that they do not lead to happiness at all, but to wreckage and loss.

In the first place where the word Heaven appears in the Bible it comes from a word meaning expanse, expansion, or space. There is no implication of locality in it at all. It may be anywhere or nowhere. Presumably the same would be true of the word Hell, or any other words meaning the same thing. The one stands for happiness at its best, the other for unhappiness at its worst.

Happiness and unhappiness are not something we find somewhere, but something we take with us wherever we go. Each of us is happy or unhappy right where he is here and now, in the one case because he has built his life of the elements of happiness, in the other because he has built it of the makings of unhappiness. If any one of us should depart this life today, he would take his happiness or unhappiness with him wherever he goes - only there it would be intensified by his new state of being and permanent in the finality of things.

We are not likely to be picked up sometime and taken somewhere we will like or not like. Whatever our destination, we are on our way right now. Some day the veil of flesh will fall away, and each of us will discover that he has arrived exactly where the Bible guide book said his chosen road would lead. In other words each will have exactly what he has lived for - good, bad, or just nothing in particular.

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AFFIRMATION

My mind and heart are full of questions, but the recorded Word of God gives me the answers. I seek out His light and follow, confident that it will guide me through.

YOUR CLASS INSTRUCTOR