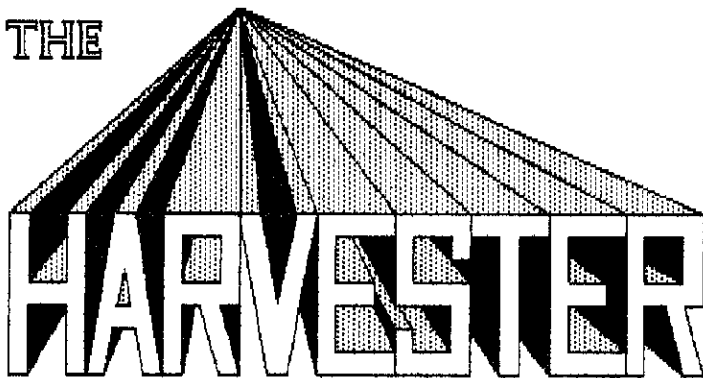


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"The harvest truly is great, but the laborers are few: pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest, that he would send forth laborers into his harvest." (Luke 10:2)

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OUR ANVIL, THE BIBLE

As we think about the blacksmith, every one seems to conjure up a familiar sight. In the middle of his shop a burly man stokes the fiery furnace. Quickly he pulls a piece of metal from the red hot coals and thrusts it on his well-worn anvil. With the bulging muscles of his other arm the blacksmith lifts a heavy hammer and repeated blows begin to mold his work of art. Amazingly, in the course of time, the hammer wears out but the anvil remains intact.

In a similar manner, I envision the book

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which we call the Bible as an enduring anvil. Think about that, friends. Isn't that an accurate picture of God's Word? The Bible has surely stood the test of time. It has been attacked in every way possible, much like the hammer that pounds away at the anvil, yet the Bible survives. Why? Because the Word of God is *"quick (alive), and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword"* (Heb. 4:12). It seems that every time the devil tries to destroy and completely explode the sacred Scriptures, the pieces come together stronger than ever. I read one time where the Bible was compared to the Irishman's fence. He had put up the fence many times only to see it torn down. Finally, he built a fence of cement and stone, three feet high and four feet wide. When asked the reason for this strange fence, he said, "I built it three feet high, and four feet wide so it will be higher when it is turned over." Likewise, holy men wrote the Bible as they were guided by the Holy Spirit (2 Pet. 1:20), a Book which shines brighter the more the truth is rubbed.

Many times the Old Testament was openly attacked and often it was neglected. In Jer. 36 we read of the time when King Jehoiakim had part of Jeremiah's prophecy cut in pieces and cast into the fire. But we still have the entire book of Jeremiah, don't we? From a different source we learn that Antiochus IV, in 100 B.C., gathered all the Testaments he could find and burned them. Anyone who kept a copy was immediately put to death. Guess what? Today Antiochus is dead and God's Word is still alive!

During the age of heathenism, when the philosophical culture of Rome ruled, emperors and governors and historians and dozens of others wrote arguments, ridicule, sneer and merciless attacks against the Bible. They tried to tell men that life is futile, that the problem of whence came man and whither he goes cannot be solved. But their pounding hammers have long since been silenced while God's Word echoes of its perfectness and its surety (Psa. 19:7).

The many martyrs of the Christian dispensation continue to testify of the indestructibility of God's commandments. Listen to the hammer crash upon the anvil: the Christians banished from Rome under Claudius' reign; the Christians who were sewed into the skins of wild animals and then torn to pieces by dogs; the Christians tied to high posts, their bodies covered with pitch, and then set on fire to light the streets while Nero's friends drove merrily by; and the Christians who were either tortured, or crucified, or dipped in seething oil, or roasted alive, etc. Every attempt was aimed at wiping the Word of God off the face of this earth. Satan failed miserably because the Bible can never be destroyed (Matt. 24:35).

The Word of God has even survived the hammer of the Islamic religion. Again and again the soldiers of Mohammedanism have tried to annihilate all Bibles and kill all Christians. But the Scriptures still prevail. In 1939 the Bible was translated into its thousandth language and the number continues to rise to this

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day. Why is this book so special? It is inspired of God (2 Tim. 3:16) and contains "*all things that pertain to life and to godliness*" (2 Pet. 1:3).

Perhaps no one has lifted more hammers against God's anvil than the Roman Catholics. In 1553 Pope Julius III was advised by a number of bishops to permit the least possible reading of the Bible in order that the Papacy might be strengthened. Since then, the Popes repeatedly condemn all reading of scriptures except in the Latin language and even that is discouraged. Were they hoping to limit the effect of God's Word (Isa. 55:11)? Did they think they were more infallible than the Creator?

Today the Bible remains under constant attack from Satan. He has tried to dethrone the Word of our God, yet he only succeeds to prove its endurance (Isa. 40:8). As Christians we have no choice but to exalt his Holy Writ and to stand in awe of his precepts (Psa. 119:161). Let the hammers come, whatever their size and from whichever direction! We know the Bible will stand true.

The Bible is certainly like the anvil which wears out many hammers and remains unblemished. As one poet so aptly described it:

Last eve I passed beside a blacksmith's door
And heard the anvil ring the vesper chime;
When looking in, I saw upon the floor,
Old hammers worn with beating years of time.

"How many anvils have you had," said I,
"To wear and batter all these hammers so?"
"Just one," said he; then said with twinkling eye,
"The anvil wears the hammers out, you know."

And so, I thought, the anvil of God's word
For ages skeptics' blows have beat upon;
Yet, though the noise of falling blows was heard,
The anvil is unharmed -- the hammers gone!

Friends, take the time to study the only book that really matters -- our anvil, the Bible.

RAY McMANUS

DID YOU KNOW: The New Testament church was built upon a foundation that included the prophets, apostles and Jesus Christ (Eph. 2:19-22). There can be no foundation laid by mankind. Christ is the ONLY sure, reliable foundation (1 Cor. 3:11).

SEARCH THE SCRIPTURES

1. Who became the king of Israel after Saul's death?
2. How much did Goliath's armor weigh?
3. Why did Pilate's wife want him to have nothing to do with Jesus?
4. Of whom is it said, "They watch for your souls"?
5. What did Aaron's staff, when it turned into a serpent, do to the Egyptian magician's staffs when theirs turned into serpents?

ANSWERS NEXT MONTH ...

and remember last month's questions?

1. Which of these characteristics describe Abigail: beautiful, intelligent, wealthy? ALL THREE (1 Sam. 25:2,3)
2. Why did Paul shave his head in Cenchrea? HE HAD A VOW (Acts 18:18)
3. According to Lamentations, why has the Lord brought grief to Judah? BECAUSE OF HER MANY TRANSGRESSIONS (Lam. 1:5)
4. What book records Jesus talking with a Samaritan woman? THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN (Jn. 4)
5. What kept the livestock from drinking of the well Jacob saw in Haran? A GREAT STONE (Gen. 29:2,3)

THE LORD'S LOYALTY

"At my first answer no man stood with me, but all men forsook me: I pray God that it may not be laid to their charge. Notwithstanding the Lord stood with me, and strengthened me; that by me the preaching might be fully known, and that all the Gentiles might hear: and I was delivered out of the mouth of the lion. And the Lord shall deliver me from every evil work, and will preserve me unto his heavenly kingdom: to whom be glory for ever and ever. Amen." (2 Tim. 4:16-18)

Just as the Lord was with Paul, so will he be with us!

Paul said that "all men forsook" him. No one was there to assist him, to help strengthen his confidence, to support him. Yet, he says the Lord was with him! And that His strength enabled Paul to continue to preach.

In our lives, sometimes we may find ourselves in the same circumstances as Paul. Perhaps there will be times when we wish for encouragement, but find none. Perhaps we will desire to feel the support of a brother or sister in Christ, but none offer to assist us. Or, perhaps there will be times that we feel alone. In all of these times, let's remember Paul and what he said about the Lord -- when everyone forsook him, the Lord was with him! And we can count on the same!

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AND GOD SAID “NO”

I asked God to take away my pride,
And God said, “No”
He said it was not for Him to take away,
But for me to give up.

I asked God to make my handicapped child whole,
And God said, “No”
He said her spirit is whole;
Her body is only temporary.

I asked God to grant me patience,
And God said, “No”
He said that patience is a by-product of
▪ tribulation.
It isn't granted, it's earned.

I asked God to give me happiness,
And God said, “No”
He said He gives us blessings;
Happiness is up to me.

I asked God to spare me pain,
And God said, “No”
He said suffering draws you apart from
worldly cares
And brings you closer to Me.

I asked God to make my spirit grow,
And God said, “No”
He said I must grow on my own,
But He will prune me to make me fruitful.

I asked God if He loves me
And God said, “Yes.”
He gave me His only Son who died for me,
And I will be in heaven someday because I
obey,

I asked God to help me to love others
As much as He loves me.
And God said, “Ah, finally you have the idea.”