

# Puzzling Queries on Bible Are Invited by Dr. Smith

### Pastor Urges Readers to Confine Questions Particularly to Series on Which He Is Preaching, Dealing With Modern Christian's Viewpoint—Gives Replies to Letters Received During Past Week.

Are there problems in connection with the Bible or religion that puzzle you? Rev. Frank G. Smith, pastor of the First Central Congregational church, is answering such questions addressed to him through the Bible editor of The Omaha Bee.

Questions should be confined as much as possible to subjects on which Dr. Smith is delivering a series of Sunday evening lectures in his church.

Last night, for instance, his topic was "The Personality of Jesus: Is He the Son of God or the Son of Man; Was He God or Was He Man; Is He Human or Is He Divine?"

**Not Seeking Debate.**  
"I have agreed to answer through The Omaha Bee as helpfully as I can all questions about which sincere people are genuinely perplexed, said Dr. Smith. "I will not agree to answer a broadside of questions from a person or an institution that already holds very definite and perhaps somewhat peculiar religious views and asks not especially for light and help, but for the sake of controversy."

In short, Dr. Smith is answering questions of people who feel their own lack of information. He is not engaging in a debate with persons who believe they know already.

Questions received last week, with Dr. Smith's answers, arranged by number, are as follows:

**QUESTIONS.**

No. 1.—Through evil temptations I humbly confess I have committed some sins and do not deserve God's forgiveness. Through the temptations I have lost the affections of one most dear to me. Will God forgive me through frequent prayer and restore my lost beloved? Please help me and answer.—A Humble Sinner.

No. 2.—What is death so-called?

No. 3.—What becomes of the natural physical body of man or woman? How does it demonstrate and what are its conditions in all future time?

No. 4.—Does the mind, power, soul, spirit, etc., again use and control a natural physical body?

No. 5.—What are the conditions of the suckling or immaturely born babe at so-called death, its future life, home, care, and progress?

No. 6.—Do you accept the statements made in the Bible to be literally or figuratively true?—William Brown, Florence.

**Asks for Proof.**

No. 7.—Has modern scholarship any final evidence such as a jury would accept in court that any one story contained in the first 11 chapters of Genesis is a myth? If so, name the story and give the proofs.

No. 8.—What do you understand by the fall of man? In this connection please interpret Jer. xvii 9: "The heart is deceitful above all things and desperately wicked." Also Matt. xviii, "For out of the heart proceed evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, thefts, false witness, blasphemies."

No. 9.—Will anything else than the blood of Jesus Christ justify a man before God and cleanse his wicked heart?

No. 10.—If the deity of Jesus and His virgin birth may be questioned, how is Isa. ix:5 to be explained, "For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given; and the government shall be upon his shoulder and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, The Mighty God, the Everlasting Father, the Prince of Peace." Also Heb. ix, "Thy throne, O God, is forever and ever." Also Phil. ii, "And that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord to the glory of God the Father."

H. M. CHAMBERS.

**ANSWERS.**

No. 1.—To "Humble Sinner" would say that God always forgives where there is genuine repentance, but genuine repentance involves something more than sick, morbid, sentimental sorrow for sin. It involves a sorrow so deep and clean and sincere that it tears the sin out of the life and turns away from it absolutely and forever. God cannot forgive sin no matter how sorry we are for it as long as we remain in it; it is only when we arise and go to the Father and leave sin that he stretches out his arms to receive us. Now as to the second part of your question, God will not restore your loved one in any magical way; if your repentance is genuine and sincere and the spirit of the Living God dwells in you, the glory and the beauty and the strength and the purity and the nobility of your new life ought to draw your loved one back to you and probably will; do not expect God to do everything as if by magic; remember we are workers together with God.

No. 2.—Concerning the question of death it is the belief of the Christian that man is a spiritual being; that while he lives himself through manifests and reveals himself through a natural physical body; that death means the separation of the soul or spirit from this natural body, the soul to pass into the realms of the spiritual world and the body to return to the dust from which it came.

No. 3.—The natural physical body, according to our belief returns to the dust of the earth. Whatever your philosophy or understanding is of the dust of the earth and what the condition may be through all future time, answers the question as to the condition through all future time of the dust that composes the physical body; it is just dust; only this and nothing more.

**Body Dies, Spirit Lives.**

No. 4.—It is our belief that the spiritual man after death does not again live in and control a physical body; that he lives in and controls a spiritual body; a body that gives to him all the powers and the capacities of individuality and reality and personality perhaps in a greater degree than does the physical body, but a spiritual body adapted to the spiritual environment in which he then lives.

No. 5.—In answer to your next question the Christian believes that all life proceeds from God; that even the unborn babe is developing under His guidance and care and that the babe in the arms of the overshadowing love and mercy of His abiding spiritual power and presence. Holding this faith is not a far step to believe that should that which we call death, change the program of these lives that the infinite love and wisdom of our God would have other means of developing these enfolded lives in that great spiritual realm whither they go.

No. 6.—Many of the statements of the Bible are literally true, while many of them are only figuratively true. If you are to get all of the beauty and glory out of the Bible that is there for you, you must read it not only with all the faith at your command, but also with all the intelligence God has given you.

**Explains View on Myths.**

No. 7.—I am taking it for granted that the asker of this question is keeping in mind the definitions given in last Sunday's paper both of a myth and a legend. If he is, then I answer that the best scholarship of the past 75 years has accumulated evidence that would be accepted by any jury of intelligent men, if it could all be presented to them that there are both mythological and legendary elements in all the five primitive stories in the first 11 chapters of Genesis. The consensus of opinion of practically all scholars who have engaged in research is that the early history of all primitive peoples begins with legends and their early religious philosophy begins with myths. The evidence has been accumulated and accepted by the same process of investigation and studying records and weighing and balancing facts as has established the law of gravity, the laws of light and heat, the law of the conservation of energy, the destructibility of matter, the law of radio-activity and many other things now quite generally accepted that formerly were not understood.

No. 8.—By the "Fall of Man" I understand that man was created morally innocent because he did not know good and evil; that in the developing process of his creation when he came to know good from evil he did not stand the test of moral responsibility; but did evil knowing it to be evil; that since the dawn of moral consciousness this test has been applied to all men in all ages; that the very knowledge of good and evil gives to humanity the capacity for such transcendent and glorious beauty of life as was revealed in Christ Jesus, who condemned sin in the flesh and likewise the capacity of such degradation as is indicated in the passages you quote.

No. 9.—In this question when you speak of the "Blood of Christ" justifying a man before God and cleansing his heart, of course you have your own interpretation of what the "Blood of Christ" means. It has to be interpreted, or course you do not mean his physical blood, for that was spilled on Calvary centuries ago. Now, if you will allow me to give my own interpretation of what the "Blood of Christ" means in the philosophy of the plan of salvation, then perhaps I might agree with your premises. Of course, this involves the discussion of the various theories of the Atonement, but the fact of the Atonement is the abiding thing and that is that Christ came to save us and that He does save us when we yield our lives to him in faith and obedience.

No. 10.—In this question you are presuming that we have questioned the Deity of Jesus and His Virgin Birth; this is in no sense a justifiable conclusion from anything that has been said in this column or in our public utterances. We have only asked that every man be allowed some freedom in the matter of interpretation; that he be allowed to examine all of the evidence that will throw light on the story of the Virgin Birth and then interpret it in the way that will magnify Christ the most in his faith and experience; and that a man may be allowed the liberty of explaining what the Deity of Jesus means to him and not be compelled to take the understanding of someone who is not any more sincere and not always as intelligent and well read as he may be. We are only asking that in our religious thinking and in our religious fellowships we be guided more and more by the motto "In essentials unity; in nonessentials liberty; in all things charity." We do not disagree about facts; we disagree about theories that grow out of them. We all agree that God made the world; we do not all agree about how He did it. We all agree that Christ came to save the world; we do not all agree about just how he does it. Referring to the matter of truth is ever established, but only measurably supported by the lifting of a single passage of scripture out of its context.

**Roads Show Decrease in "Bad Order" Cars**

Washington, March 25.—Railroads during January, 1923, had 9 per cent of their freight cars classified as unserviceable, the Interstate Commerce commission reported Saturday, against 13.8 per cent so classified in the same month a year ago, and 8.8 per cent during January, 1921. During the same period, 26.1 per cent of their freight locomotives were in bad order against 22.5 per cent in January, 1922, and 24.2 per cent during January, 1921.

The commission included in its report the consolidated repair records of carriers which indicated that the bad order preparation of freight cars during the shop strike last summer had reached a high point of 14.2 per cent, steadily dwindling in later months. Approximately 79 per cent of freight locomotives were classified in bad order in September, during the strike and at the same time 26.8 per cent of passenger locomotives were in need of repairs.

Because of war, Jerusalem has been captured and destroyed more than any city in history.

# INSURANCE ADJUSTORS DEMAND IMMEDIATE DISPOSAL OF EVERY GARMENT IN THE BEDDEO STOCK

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We seriously doubt if another such buying opportunity will present itself to Omaha people. Here you can buy two, three and four spring garments at what one garment would have cost you had we escaped this fire. Hundreds upon hundreds of Garments were in glass

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**Men's Suits, Top Coats, Gaberdines, Boys' Suits, Men's Hats, Shoes, Trousers, Women's and Misses' Coats, Capes, Wraps, Suits, Dresses, Skirts, Sweaters, Footwear, etc.**

**BUY ON PAYMENTS During This Gigantic Fire Sale**

Our big, liberal Easy Payment Plan of selling merchandise will be in full effect during this sale. Buy all you need—all you will use for months to come. A reasonable down payment and the balance can be cared for on terms to best suit your convenience.

**Cash or Credit, Price the Same**

**It is Important that You Plan on an Early Attendance**

It is a foregone conclusion that the greatest crowds that have ever responded to any sale will be here Tuesday. We have arranged the stock to facilitate the easiest possible selections. Our advice is to be here early and prepared to buy a season's supply.

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