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THE RECORD OF THE EVIDENCE

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Number Five: **"The Record Of The Evidence"** - another look at the Bible, in the larger setting of the great controversy over God's character and government.

Without the Bible we would know nothing about this conflict in God's family. Nor would we have the record of how He has demonstrated His trustworthiness by His infinitely skillful and gracious way of handling the revolt. But can the Bible itself be trusted? Do we have the right collection of sixty-six books? And, most of all, can we have confidence that we understand the meaning?

Welcome to the fifth of our conversations about God. Another look at our heavenly Father in the larger setting of the great controversy over His character and government. And since the topic for our conversation this evening is the Bible as the record of the evidence on which we base our decision about God and whether we find Him worthy of our trust, I brought along my *King James Version*. Now most of you may think you have brought your *King James Versions*, but you have only brought along modern miniature replicas. This is what the *King James Version* looked like when it was first printed in 1611. Now I don't possess an original. You can go down to the Huntington Library if you want to see one, but this is the most magnificent facsimile of an ancient book I have ever seen. The cover is just right. Look at the thickness of it, its just the way it was on the original. Inside you can glimpse even the staining of the paper.

And, of course, as a facsimile the spelling is just the way it looked in those days. The S's all look like F's. Everything is spelled like "Ye olde sweete shoppe". The references down the middle are all different if there are any at all. The titles at the top are different. The chapter summaries are different. The Apocrypha is in the middle. There are many opening chapters that are very different, and the thing you notice most of all is the weight - 20 pounds. Can you imagine encouraging our little ones to take their Bibles to Sabbath School or Sunday School? Can you see a flock of little wheelbarrows converging on our churches carrying these Bibles?

It was much easier tonight to bring the smallest version of the Bible I have ever seen. If I can remember where I put it. I think in my shirt pocket. Yes, here it is. That's the smallest Bible that has ever been produced. Now that's the whole Bible. Let me read what this contains: 1,245 pages of Bible text on a little piece of plastic, 773,746 words. In clear, easy-to-read type it says, but the reduction is 62,500 to 1. So you will need a device that can magnify one hundred times and then you can read the smallest Bible in the world. Those are the two extremes. Although there was a Bible even bigger than this known as the *Great Bible*. They used to keep it chained in the churches, though I should think it not very likely that too many would run away with a Bible that size.

But the point of the evening is that: without the Bible we would know nothing about this great controversy over the character and government of God. Nor would we know about His infinitely skillful and gracious handling of this conflict - this crisis of distrust in His family. But we have been assuming all along that the Bible can be trusted and there are legitimate questions that can be raised, and have indeed been raised, through the years: How do we know that we have the right collection of Sixty-six books? How do we know that the words of those books

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have been accurately transmitted through the ages? How do we know that they have been adequately translated, i.e., can you trust the versions of the Bible? Most important of all, can we have any confidence in our interpretation of these books and these words? When we have read it through, can we say, "I really have seen dependable evidence about my God?"

First of all let's consider very briefly what we sometimes take a whole year to do when students are specializing in this subject. Let's consider the question: Do we have the right collection of Sixty-six books? Because some Bibles have many more than that. If you are carrying with you tonight the *New American Bible*, the *Jerusalem Bible*, or some printings of the *New English Bible*, or even the original *King James*, you will find that there are extra books - most particularly in translations used by our Roman Catholic friends. They will have about a dozen more books in the Old Testament, not in the middle, but scattered through. Now what do you do when you are visiting a friend who has a Bible with these extra books and that individual has confidence that his or her Bible is the inspired word of God? Are you going to say, "your version is not inspired but mine is?" Would it help to use 2 Timothy 3:16 (RSV)? It has been used in this way through the years. "All Scripture is inspired by God and profitable for teaching. . ." Does that settle the question? What books are being referred to as "all Scripture"?

Well suppose we use the original *King James Version*. There is that verse, right in this heavy 20-pound version. "All Scripture is inspired of God. . .", and do you know what is in the middle of this 20-pound Bible? All those extra books that are in Roman Catholic Bibles. The *King James Version* always contained the books of the Apocrypha. In fact they remained there until 1827. That's more than 200 years, until the British and Foreign Bible Society decided that they didn't have the funds to continue circulating those Apocryphal books.

It was Luther who first gathered those books together and put them in the middle. When he translated his influential German Bible, that had so much to do with the rise of the reformation, he was translating from the original, and knowing, as a Roman Catholic himself, the Latin, he had to decide whether or not to include those extra books that were scattered through his Old Testament. He gathered them together and put them in the middle with an interesting notice: "these books are interesting and useful to read but they should not be used for doctrine."

When he turned his attention to the New Testament, you remember, he came to four books that he couldn't fit in too well either. He didn't call them Apocryphal, just of lesser authority because they didn't teach Christ: Hebrews, James, Jude and Revelation. He put them at the end, where they remain to this day, in German Bibles. Of course, if you are in a Roman Catholic home, your Catholic friend can say, "My Bible has that verse - 'All Scripture is inspired of God', and this is my Scripture and therefore that verse proves the inspiration of the Apocrypha." That's official Roman Catholic teaching, by the way.

That is why it is so important to know that the Greek of that verse can be translated another way, and I believe the context dictates that it be so translated. Look at the *New English Bible* rendering of 2 Tim. 3:16: "Every inspired Scripture has its use for teaching the truth. . ." An uninspired scripture is something else. You see it is very likely that Timothy's Bible was the Greek Old Testament which contained these extra books. And that's why Paul had to say to Timothy, "Timothy, you have many books in your possession, but only that scripture which is inspired of God is profitable. . ."

It's helpful to notice the total context there. Look at the preceding paragraph: 2 Timothy

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3:14-17 (NEB) Paul wrote to that young Pastor: "But for your part, stand by the truths you have learned and are assured of. Remember from whom you learned them; remember that from early childhood you have been familiar with the sacred writings" (writings or scriptures it's the same word in Greek) "which have power to make you wise and lead you to salvation through faith in Christ Jesus. Every inspired scripture" (Timothy, you know what I mean) "has its use for teaching the truth and refuting error, or for reformation of manners and discipline in right living, so that the man who belongs to God may be efficient and equipped for good work of every kind." (parentheses supplied)

Now to orthodox Jews, the ones who had the Bible first, there were only the 39 with which most of us are familiar. Sometimes they counted them as 24 or sometimes as 22 by combining them together. It all began with Moses and the first five books. When the man who had been up on Mt. Sinai came down carrying the ten commandments, with his face shining so brightly they couldn't even look at him, he said, "I am giving you some dependable messages from the Lord," there was every reason to accept them, and take them seriously. So they built up a collection of the first five books. They became known as the Law - the Law of Moses. They became the standard, or the rule, or even the Canon.

Then as later books came along, written by other prophets, they were all measured by the first standard,- the Law. Until by and by we had the Law and the Prophets. And then other writings came along known as the Writings, the Holy Writings, or the Psalms. These were compared with the Prophets and with the Law, until finally there were the 39, divided into three Canons: the Law, the Prophets and the Writings, or the Law, the Prophets and the Psalms, since Psalms was number one in the third Canon. Sometimes the Law, the Prophets and the Hagiographa, that is, the Holy Writings.

The New Testament consistently recognized these and I think it is most significant that Jesus would refer to the Old Testament by these three Canons without any question as to their dependability. Look at Luke 24:44 (RSV). "Everything written about me in the law of Moses and the prophets and the psalms must be fulfilled." But in reading other verses in the New Testament it's important to know that sometimes they shorten the Law, the Prophets and the Psalms down to just the Law and the Prophets. Sometimes they shorten it clear down to: the Law. So sometimes the Law means the whole Old Testament.

Look at Matthew 5:17, 18 (RSV). Jesus said, "Think not that I have come to abolish the law and the prophets; (that's the whole Old Testament) I have come not to abolish them but to fulfill them. For truly, I say to you, till heaven and earth pass away, not an iota,(an `i) not a dot, will pass from the law until all is accomplished." (parentheses supplied) Sometimes we make the mistake of assuming that this must be the ten commandments. No, He's talking about the whole Old Testament under the name of the Law.

A good illustration of that is John 10:34 (RSV), "Jesus answered them, `Is it not written in your law, "I said you are gods.?"'" Do you know where that is from in the Old Testament? It's in Psalms 82:6. So Jesus was calling the Psalms, the Law. Now that helps with many verses in the New Testament. And while we are talking about Jesus' comment on the Old Testament there in John 10, look at His confidence in the Old Testament. John 10:34, 35 (GNB) "Jesus answered, . . . We know that what the scripture says is true forever." It seems to me that to a Christian, Christ's confidence in the Old Testament as delineated here should be of great significance.

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Now these Canons: the Law, the Prophets and the Writings, you can see them developing back in Old Testament times. Look at Isaiah 8:19, 20 (NIV), "When men tell you to consult mediums and spiritists, who whisper and mutter, should not a people inquire of their God? Why consult the dead on behalf of the living? To the law and to the testimony!" (i.e., to the first five books of Moses and to the prophets) "If they do not speak according to this word, they have no light of dawn." A very clear place is provided in Zechariah 7:12 (NIV) where you can see this continuity running through Scriptures as these Canons are developing, as each book is tested: Does it measure up to the rule? Eventually the New Testament is measured by the same Canons, the same rules, the same measures. Look at Zechariah 7:12 "They made their hearts as hard as flint and would not listen to the law or to the words that the Lord Almighty had sent by his Spirit through the earlier prophets."

Now it is interesting to note the books that are in these three Canons: The Law: Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, Deuteronomy.

The Prophets: Joshua, Judges, Samuel, Kings, Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, Hosea, Joel, Amos, (and the so-called Minor Prophets) Obadiah, Jonah, Micah, Nahum, Habakkuk, Zephaniah, Haggai, Zechariah, Malachi. (Do you think of Joshua through Kings as prophetic books?)

The Writings: Psalms, Proverbs, Job, Song of Solomon, Ruth, Lamentations, Ecclesiastes, Esther, Daniel, Ezra, Nehemiah, Chronicles. (Why is Daniel not in the Prophets?)

You add to these 39 books the 27 in the New Testament Canon and you have the Sixty-six. But these are not the only books that have ever claimed to be Biblical. There are far more outside the Bible than inside. Many of these were accepted by people in the Mediterranean world, and some to this present day. Many of them were written between the Testaments, and some bear striking resemblance to the books that are in the Canons. About a dozen of them were taken so seriously by the Jews that were scattered abroad outside of Palestine, (where they tended to be more orthodox) that they found their place in the Greek Old Testament, called the Septuagint, which was the Bible widely-used by the early Christians. That's how those extra books came to have such a place in the early history of the Christian church, and found a fixed place in the Latin Bible and on down to this day in Roman Catholic Bibles.

Now, I thought it would be convenient to list a few of these. All the Old Testament Apocryphal books are here:

I and II Esdras, Tobit, Judith, Additions to Esther (these are all mixed into Esther), Wisdom of Solomon, Ecclesiasticus (not Ecclesiastes), Baruch, Susanna, Song of the Three Children, Bel and the Dragon (great detective stories, those), Prayer of Manasseh and I and II Maccabees.

But going back to the 12 (or 13 or 14, however you count those, some of them are rather fragmentary) that are in Catholic Bibles, the orthodox Jews did not recognize them. They called them hidden, suggesting they were spurious and many others have agreed with them. Many Catholic theologians have. Even the great Jerome did not want to include them in his revision of the Latin Bible, called the Vulgate, but the people were so accustomed to them they insist that they be left there. Other Catholic theologians and Biblical scholars have wanted to leave them out.

But when Luther gathered them in the middle and took the position that he did under the circumstances of those days, the church felt that it had to respond. So at the counsel of Trent in

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1546, the 14 books of the Apocrypha were pronounced sacred and canonical. That's why they are in such Bibles as the *Jerusalem* and the *New American* and so on. But there were many other books which were not accepted at all by most of the early Christians, and they are not accepted by our Roman Catholic friends to this day. They are called the Old Testament Pseudepigrapha, which means "falsely-entitled". Well, how should we decide which books do belong? I think it helps a great deal to know that there were many other Apocryphal or hidden books whose sources were unknown and whose teaching was so questionable, and among these were the so-called Pseudepigrapha. I picked out just a few. There are many more than this:

The Testament of Adam, The book of Jubilees, Testament of the 12 Patriarchs, Testament of Job, Book of Enoch, Sibylline Oracles, the Assumption of Moses, the Martyrdom of Isaiah, Psalms of Solomon, Magical books of Moses, the story of Ahikar.

Then if you go further, did you know there is a whole collection of books called the New Testament Apocrypha? They are:

The gospel of Thomas, the Book of James, the Assumption of the Virgin, the Acts of John, the Acts of Paul, the Acts of Peter, Letters between Christ and King Abgarus, Letter of Lentulus, the Apocalypse of Peter, the Apocalypse of Paul.

Now how should one decide which of these is inspired? I think it helps a great deal to know the history of the origin of these books. That provides some clue. I think the opinion of centuries of believers who were much closer to the writing of these books than we are is of consequence but nothing compares with reading them all. I have done it several times. It takes a long weekend without any interruptions to read all the way through the Old Testament and then the Old Testament Apocrypha and the Old Testament Pseudepigrapha and the New Testament Apocrypha. As you arrive at the Revelation of Peter, you haven't forgotten Maccabees and Enoch and Genesis. They are still clear in your mind. In my opinion the Sixty-six are in a class all by themselves.

There are some Apocryphal books that seem much more acceptable than others. But as you go into even the book of Maccabees, it teaches that "it's a good thing to pray for the dead, that they may be relieved of their sins." If it's true that my prayers to God will change the status of somebody who died a rebel, then that will cancel out everything else we want to say about God during these 20 conversations. "The giving of alms atones for sin". Do you see the model of what's gone wrong in the universe that that implies. And I wish I could tell you about the others, the incredible stories in the New Testament Apocrypha: stories of magic and mystery and how Peter made a camel go through the eye of a needle; and the story of John and the bedbugs; and how Peter prayed that Simon Magus would fall down over the city of Rome, and he did and even broke his leg in three places. You should see these stories. But when you read them all together, I personally agree with Catholic Jerome, and Protestant Luther and the great Bible Societies that the Sixty-six are the ones that really measure up.

But then we have the question 'what about the right words'? That's a huge subject. There are people who devote all their lives to this. First of all, I am sure you are aware that the Bible was not written in English, but in Hebrew, Aramaic and Greek.

I put some samples of these languages on the Bible reference sheet. The first line is Hebrew. See the little dots? They're vowels, they didn't have those in the beginning and you

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read it from right to left. And the Aramaic right below is very much like the Hebrew, isn't it? Again read from right to left. Then the Greek of the New Testament is left to right as you can tell from the English words below. But this is in modern form. The ancient didn't look like this- especially the Greek. It was all in capital letters and there was no separation between the words. How would you read the phrase?:

GODISNOWHERE

Are you going to read it as an Atheist might - God is nowhere. Or are you going to say as a believer might - God is now here. Can you see how saints have argued and accused each other through the years of introducing their own theology into the Bible? It's much more innocent than that. How easily one could make a mistake of that point.)

Now, as you know, all the original copies of the Bible have disappeared. There are hundreds and thousands of hand-written copies though, that have come down to us through the years and no two of them are the same, which could distress a person who doesn't know better. But if you have had a chance to see these manuscripts - hundreds and thousands of them - and note what the differences are, you would be moved rather to say, no other ancient document has been preserved with such care and accuracy as the Books of the Bible. That's why I agree with the notable scholar, Sir Frederic Kenyon, one-time curator of the British Museum, who spent a lifetime studying such matters, when he said: "The Christian can take the whole Bible in his hand and say without fear or hesitation that he holds in it the true Word of God, handed down without essential loss from generation to generation throughout the centuries."

But what about all the translations? There are about 2,000 languages on earth and there are Bibles, or at least parts of the Bible, in almost every one of those languages. There are hundreds of translations in English. For a little while I contemplated bringing mine from home and displaying them here until I measured them and found I would need a table 28 feet long. And I only have a few. I have about 150 and there are many more than that.

The story behind them all is so long and colorful. In 1382, the morning star of the reformation - Wycliffe - made a translation. A magnificent Bible, all written out by hand, because printing hadn't been invented yet. You can get modern, i.e. 1845 or 1850, reprints of it. We have a set in our own library at Loma Linda University. Rather hard to get.

In 1525, there came *Tyndale's* translation, the first printed English New Testament. Ninety percent of his work is in our *King James Version*. Though poor Tyndale was arrested, strangled, and burned to death at the stake for daring to translate the Bible into such readable English. Of course, in his Bible he was inclined to include some notes that were rather inflammatory, such as opposite the story of the Golden Calf: "Yea, but the Pope's bull slayeth more than Aaron's calf." This was hardly designed to win him friends and it may have cost him his life.

The great *Geneva Bible* which was produced by the Calvinists, who fled from England to the Continent, came to be known as the Britches Bible, because it says that Adam and Eve "took fig leaves and sewed unto themselves britches."

Then the great *King James Version*. There were no notes, because the preceding Bibles had had so many that had stirred up so much trouble. Then think of all the revisions of the *King James Version*: The *English Revised*, the *American Revised*, and the *Revised*

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Standard. And now we have the *New American Standard Bible*, many are carrying it these days, and even the *New King James Version*.

Around the turn of the century, the modern speech Bibles began to appear. Some of them, sadly, are being forgotten now. Think of forgetting *Moffatt's* great work, and *Weymouth's*, and *Goodspeed's*. *Goodspeed's New Testament* is still one of the very best, finished in 1923. But some were opposed to any modern speech versions. In fact, some even thought that the *King James Version* was too "vulgar". There was a man in Boston in 1833 who felt that the *King James Version* was almost crude in its speech. So he redid the Bible. Do you remember when Elizabeth stood in front of Mary, and they both were awaiting the arrival of their children - John and Jesus - the *King James Version* says, "the babe leapt in her womb". Mr. Dickinson thought that was very crude. So in his Bible he changed those words to read, "the embryo was joyfully agitated". And his translation reads like that all the way through.

There are versions that were produced by ladies. And I think ladies should make more use of these. Mrs. Montgomery did it in 1925 and Helen Spurrell in 1885. There are also many magnificent Roman Catholic translations: the *Knox*, the *Kleist and Lilly*, the *Jerusalem*, the *New American*, the *Spencer*, the *Alberhouse*, and the *Rheims-Douay* which was the first Roman Catholic English version.

There are also great Jewish translations, especially one that has been going on for the last twenty years. I wish I could tell you more about the quality of translation in there. Gen. 2:7 says, "God breathed into man the breath of life and man became a living being." There is an explanation from the Jews who know better than anybody else that the Hebrew word usually translated "soul" means "the whole person, even the blood in his veins" as explained by the chairman of that committee.

There are joint Protestant - Roman Catholic Bibles: the *Revised Standard Version - RC (Roman Catholic)*. There is even a joint Protestant, Catholic, and Jewish translation being prepared. It is the biggest version ever produced, called the *Anchor Bible*. So far (1984) thirty six volumes have appeared, and there will be about twenty more before that job is done.

There are also some very strange ones: the *New Testament translated from Numerology*, and the *Spiritist's Bible*.

There are Bibles that are especially helpful for study, for example: The *New Testament from 26 Translations*. There are Octapla's (eight versions printed together) and hexapla's (six versions printed together), and others with four or two versions put together.

And there are some Bibles that are so very readable: *Phillips* (who died a little while ago) whose work is so magnificent. The *Good News Bible*, also called the *Today's English Version*, produced by the American Bible Society. And there is the *New English Bible*, which was England's desperate attempt to save the British Isles for Christianity. That is why that version is so unique, so readable, and so different.

Finally we come to the paraphrases, like the *Living Bible*. If we only knew more about Dr. Kenneth Taylor, we would find that more rewarding to read, although he says it is only a paraphrase. And what of the *Cotton Patch New Testament - Letters to the Saints in Atlanta, Georgia*. And "*God Is For Real, Man*". That's the ultimate limit - trying to make the Bible readable to the gangs that roam the streets of New York. Would you support a man who would

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do that? The 23rd Psalm turns out to be "the Lord is my probation officer", because many of them have never seen sheep or a shepherd on the streets of downtown New York. I have unlimited respect for the people who are willing to do all this work. It takes a lifetime to produce some of these. I even have room for the *Reader's Digest Bible*, though it leaves out some of my favorite sections. It is only meant to be an appetizer. You see, the Bible has never been so available, or so readable.

And fear of versions is lessening now. No one is prepared to burn the *Revised Standard Version* as someone did when it first appeared. The address of that public burning was appropriately, Furnace Street, Akron, Ohio. I have a photograph of it in a newspaper. The right attitude towards versions, I think, was in the original *King James* preface. I wish it was still being printed there. You see, nobody wanted the *King James* when it first came out. It wasn't just the size, the words were changed and the men who prepared this great Bible say in the introduction "Hath the Kingdom of God become words and syllables; why should we be in bondage to them when we may be free?"

As Hebrews 1:1 (RSV) says, "In many and various ways God spoke of old to our fathers.." through the years. And in many and various ways those words have been translated - into English and most of the other languages on this earth. How else could the gospel go to all the world? How could people find out about our God? And so my recommendation would be: take the Bible, or preferably the several versions of your choice, and let's sit down together, and take up the fourth question in our next lesson. Having these magnificent opportunities - never has the Bible been so readily available - and having all this evidence so readily available, let's read it. Can we confidently come to the conclusion that we understand the meaning; that the evidence is really there, the Bible can be trusted? Some of us, who have spent a lot of time reading these versions, believe that the Author who is behind the Bible can be trusted because there is trustworthy evidence in the record.

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Conversations About God - Tape 5B

Maxwell: Question on tonight's subject. Here we are.

Comment: I always wondered what kind of rules they had for deciding when the writing is close enough, or early enough, you know, to the original, to be trusted, or something like that.

Maxwell: Yes. That is the most subjective part of this whole thing, and really provokes the mind to think about it. We're not going to allow some Church Council to tell us, or some committee to tell us, are we? So in a certain way, we do it again ourselves. I mean, to feel really, really secure about it. But along the way, of course, the Bible has a long history, and we treat it with great respect, to be sure. And, I mean, there are a lot of reasons for accepting the Bible as it is.

But ultimately, I think, one really has to go back and say, "Have I found for myself, there is that underlying harmony all the way through, starting with the Law and the Prophets, and the Psalms, and the New Testament?"

Because then, if one is accustomed to doing that, then what if someone should arise in these last days, purporting to speak with authority? Then I'm accustomed to conducting this measuring. And I think that's the way it has to be done. So that if you made a pronouncement right now; if it measures up to all of this other, then it has all the authority I need. It doesn't matter whether it came from a billion miles up in the sky. If it's true, it's true. So this becomes a way of measuring things.

But historically, I think it began with Moses there. And you imagine, with the relationship he had with God, and bringing the Ten Commandments, and going into the Tabernacle, and they wondered if he'd come back. And he came out from where the Glory was, and had not been consumed. And when he spoke for God, they took him seriously. They didn't always obey, to be sure, but they did regard him as speaking seriously for God.

And then the remaining books came along. There are some of them, you know, for whom we don't know the author. We don't know who wrote certain books. There are theories about it. But we measure the content of the book. If I found something in one of those books that was seriously in contradiction with the central core of scripture, I'd have an interesting problem to deal with.

If Paul said, "The giving of alms atones for sin," I'd have trouble with that. Or if Peter said that, "Wherefore it is a holy and wholesome thought to pray for the dead, that they may be relieved from their sins."

But now we have to realize that some of our Christian friends have no difficulty with that. Well, I remember when President Kennedy was assassinated. Remember Cardinal Cushing's many prayers? See, he prayed for the dead many times - Cardinal Cushing did. Now, he must have done the Mass in Latin so long, that it was not a burden with Cardinal Cushing, to be understood. You couldn't understand him in English. Do you remember how very difficult it was to hear him? I wanted to hear every word he said. But I could tell very clearly at times, he was praying that the soul of President Kennedy be sent on with as little delay as possible. Because you know, it would have to be by way of Purgatory for purification, and then on to celestial bliss.

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Well, he had his key text. His key text was II Maccabees 12:36, I think. That's the text. "Wherefore it is a holy and wholesome thought to pray for the dead, that they may be relieved from their sins."

Or let's say I'm reading the Revelation of St. Peter. I wish there had been time to tell you something from every one of those books, short of you having time to read them all yourself. You know, you could promise yourself sometime, to get all those volumes, and closet yourself for three or four days, and read all the way through. The only difficulty then is, you've got to remember which is Biblical, and which is not - because some of them are really quite close.

But if you're reading the Revelation of St. Peter, that is the first Christian description of Hell. And it is very detailed. And you can see where Dante was influenced in his Inferno.

There are several apocalypses - there is one of Paul. And in there, each person is punished in the fire, very specifically, for his sin. For example, if your sin was one of lying, then perhaps you would be suspended by your tongue over a hot flame for eternity; because your tongue was the instrument by which you sinned. If it should be, perhaps, that some other part of the body was the instrument of indulgence, then perhaps it would be suitably tortured. And let your minds roam over that possibility.

And you should just read in there, how in that picture of Hell, everybody is tortured as he deserves, for eternity. Now, if I read that in the Canonical books, I'd have a problem.

But from the stories of magic that are in the Gospels - unbelievable stories, where the power of Christ is used just to amaze people.

There is a very interesting story how Jesus was playing on Sabbath in the mud, and was making little pigeons - you've heard this one, I'm sure. And one of the boys ran off to Joseph and said, "You better come. Your Son is breaking the Sabbath; He's making thing."

And so Joseph came running down and said, "Jesus, how could You do this on the Sabbath?" And Jesus clapped His hands; and all the pigeons flew away, chirping as they went.

Now, there are many variations of this; just as there are manuscripts of the books in the Bible, there are different manuscripts of the Apocryphal books.

And then that awful one I told you, where He cursed that boy and he died. Imagine the community coming to Joseph and Mary saying, "Please remove your Child from this community. We cannot stand so violent a boy among us." And that's gentle Jesus. Now some of these - I mean, bells ring right, and you lay it to the side.

Others are closer. Like one of the Maccabees, I Maccabees, is one of the few histories we have, of what happened between the Testaments. And that's quite useful. And some of the others have some very good thoughts.

Well, you ought to read what the Wisdom of Solomon has to say about the ladies. "Like a sandy climb to an old man's feet, is a talkative wife to a quiet man." And things like that, you know. And so you might read that and say, "Well, I think I could fit that in." And others. [Laughter]

But over all -- I wasn't agreeing, you understand -- when you read them through, some things

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are not much of a problem; some are more of a problem; some are clearly not fitting at all.

So ultimately, for your own satisfaction, I'm sure you'd like to read all the way through. I've done it more than once. And the Sixty-six are just outstanding! But now, I've made that judgment myself. I'm not dependant on some authority, or some committee, or some council. I agree: the Sixty-six are the ones.

Venden: You used the word in your presentation about the Canon of the Old Testament - these three Canon. I wondered if it might be helpful if you explained just a bit what you mean by Canons.

Maxwell: Yes, because it has other meanings, doesn't it? But "Canon" means a measure or a rule by which you measure something. The Canon in those days was the picture presented in the first five books of Moses. That became the original Canon, by which all the others were measured.

Ultimately, our Canon would be the truth. Of course, how do you establish the truth? And we now derive evidence from many sources - from experience, from history, from observation. And it's because all of that evidence fits together like a Mosaic, we say, "Now that really adds up. It doesn't even violate my common sense." And that becomes a Canon.

And if you find you are believing many things that really violate your common sense; and you say, "Well, I could only believe that because it's religious," I would become increasingly uncomfortable with that. So the basic meaning of measure or rule.

Venden: Did you also use it this evening as a reference to a collection of books?

Maxwell: It's a group that meets, meets up, measures up to the rule is called the Canon. That's right.

Venden: We have a couple of other questions that have been handed me. I think they would be appropriate to handle this evening:

Who compiled the Catholic Bible?

Who compiled the Old Testament scriptures?

Who compiled the Protestant Bible?

Could you give us just a bit more on that?

Maxwell: Yes. There are whole books on this, entitled, maybe, Text, Canon and Translation of the Bible, or some just on the Canon alone. There are traditions. I would take an Orthodox Jewish tradition very seriously -- now, it might not necessarily be true. And they took the view that Ezra, Ezra and Nehemiah together, were very influential in closing up the Old Testament Canon. And there's a lot of evidence that could be cited. And I'm perfectly willing to live with that. I'm also perfectly willing to live with not knowing who did it, as far as that's concerned.

And it wasn't immediately done. And this may be why Daniel is not in the Canon of the Prophets. He's in the Canon of the Writings. Interesting possibilities there.

But then when you come to the New Testament Canon, it took quite awhile for them to agree on the Twenty-seven. In fact, by the fourth century, they were still debating this. There were two

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books that particularly troubled people: Hebrews and Revelation. And the folk in one part of the Mediterranean world were in favor of Hebrews, but didn't want Revelation. And vice versa in the side. But eventually they settled on the Twenty-seven.

But then there are all those others floating around the outside. It's much easier though, to read the New Testament Apocrypha and decide, "It simply doesn't belong in the New Testament Canon." Those are incredible books, and incredible stories. They're great fun to read.

I would suggest if we had a -- we could do it for a whole year -- if we had four lesson Quarterlies on the stories in the Apocrypha, attendance would pick up notably, you know. [Laughter]

Tomorrow: John and the Bedbugs.

The next time: How Peter Made a Camel Go Through the Eye of a Needle.

And all those incredible stories. Shame on us, though, that we'd need that!

But the early Christians - they found these highly entertaining. Well, you know, they are very valuable in telling us what early Christians preferred. In many ways. For example: Many of the early Christians felt that if you were truly spiritual, you would never get married. These were the Aesthetics, you know.

And so there five Acts of the Apostles, which show the apostles itinerating around the Mediterranean world conducting evangelistic efforts, separating husbands from their wives. And actually, saving some young couples right on their honeymoons, from doing that terrible, terrible thing. You should read how dramatic those are.

Well, in the Canon we have Luke-Acts. We have physician Luke writing both the Gospel and the book of Acts. And he speaks so well of women, and of marriage, and so on. And so these early Christians did not like Luke-Acts. So they took out Luke-Acts and put these apocryphal ones in there.

Well, along with the teaching that if you're really spiritual, you'll not get married -- and by the way, has this had wide acceptance in some parts of Christianity to this day! You know, if you're really dedicated, you won't get married. Now, if you can't be that dedicated, it's all right. Which means that we're all second-class saints here tonight, who have done this terrible thing and have gotten married. But the Lord is kind; He will forgive us. You know.

Now, you don't find that in the New Testament. But you'll find it in the Apocrypha. In the same Apocryphal Acts, you'll find these amazing stories; like Peter making a camel go through the eye of a needle.

It's what that implies though. See, Peter is conducting these meetings. And he comes to a city and begins to preach. And a man comes up after one of the meetings and says, "If you'll perform a miracle for me, I will be converted and give you a thousand pieces of gold to support your work." And what evangelist would want that to slip away? And so Peter says to the man, "Speak on; what miracle do you want?"

And the man said, "If you'll make a camel go through the eye of a needle, then I will be converted and give my thousand pieces of gold to support you."

And in this account - now, one has to be careful with this - one of the most widely read

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translations is by Montague Rhodes [sp?] James of Oxford University. And he does it in King James English. So it might sound a little irreligious here.

It has Peter saying, lifting his eyes heavenward, "O Lord, Thou hast entrapped us by Thy words. Nevertheless, Lord, strengthen his faith."

And he said to the man, "So be it. Bring hither a needle." And so someone scurried off to find the biggest needle in town - a tentmaker's needle. And Peter looked at the person and said, "O ye of little faith, bring hither a surgeon's needle."

Now, it's interesting that in Luke's account, he uses the surgeon's needle. The other Gospel writers use the tentmaker's needle. Which is further evidence that he may well have been a physician.

And so they brought a little surgeon's needle and stuck it in the ground. Meanwhile, the man had changed his mind. He really didn't want to be converted and part with all that money. And so as they were hiring a camel, he had also hired a woman of dubious reputation in the town, thinking that would cancel out the miracle. And then as double insurance, he got a huge piece of pork, and hung it on the side of the camel.

But Peter was undaunted. Now, I'm reading now the New Testament Apocrypha:

And so Peter said to the woman, and the camel, and the pork, and all: "Advance through the eye of the needle." And the camel, and the woman, and the pork - the swine's flesh - approached. And to the man's horror, the eye of the little surgeon's needle began to open wider, and wider, and wider. And the camel, and the woman, and the pork went through; and for a good measure, turned and went back the other way.

And Peter turned to the man and said, "Now, are you ready to be converted? And how about the thousand pieces of gold?"

"Well, not quite so quick," the man says; "one moment. "If I can perform the miracle, then I will do what I have promised."

And Peter said, "Be it unto ye according to your faith."

And the man, praying like some people on Monday morning who knock on the door and hope there's nobody home, he said, "Lord, please make the camel go through the eye of the needle." And he waited breathlessly. And to his horror, the eye opened. And the camel, and the woman, and the pork passed through; but stuck in the middle! And so he turned to Peter and said, "Peter, help me! I believe; help thou mine unbelief." And Peter prayed, and the man's faith was strengthened; and the eye opened, and the camel and the women and the pork passed through.

Do you know, a thousand souls were converted that day! And he gave all his money to support the ministry.

Now how do you like the picture of God?

You see, that's the way to win souls. Miracles! you see. And isn't that popular to this day. You'll

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find much that's popular in religion today, very old. Many things that are going on, that are thought to be a real revival around the world, I could match most of it - the excitement, even a lot of other things that are described as "charismatic" - in those early years; it has a long, long history. And that's why it is worthwhile reading them. It's even fun.

Venden: We might have quite a demand, if we were offering copies of that, along with the copies of your book. "This we believe, this. . ."

Maxwell: Well, if you want to get it, beyond the James one, they've put out a brand new one — a German scholar; it's a two-volume set of a real modern, up-to-date translation of the New Testament Apocrypha. So if you're serious about wanting it on your shelf, look for that two-volume one, rather than the smaller blue one in Oxford blue color.

Venden: Here's a question - again tied in with tonight: Since we believe that the New Testament books harmonize with the Old Testament Canons, how is it that the Jews do not accept these books, if they meet their old standards?

Maxwell: Oh, that's a really thoughtful question. As they look at the New, they find it doesn't fit. That's generalizing now, of course. Some have decided that it does. And Paul, a Number One Jew, a Pharisee of the Pharisees; as he looked at the growing Christian Gospel, he said, "That fits the Old Testament." And he magnificently wove the Christian message into the Old Testament message as an unbroken thread. I find no break between Paul and the Old Testament. And others have done it.

Well. You know, you marvel at the thought that a Jew, like a Seventh-day Adventist, you know, could feel so sure, so certain for so long. And then go through that awful experience of being told by the Son of God, that they were wrong. I mean, to eat humble pie and say, "I accept that correction." We shouldn't be too hard on other people. We'd find it hard ourselves.

And besides, they had learned to read the Old Testament in different ways, like the 53rd of Isaiah was not about the suffering Messiah. They didn't want a suffering Messiah; they wanted a Messiah who would lead them against the Romans. And if you want evidence for that, you read the Old Testament Apocrypha. In the Old Testament Apocrypha, there does arise a leader who leads them to victory against their enemies, and establishes what Menachem Begin wants so much, you know. And you know, I hear him repeating the thoughts of many verses in the Old Testament: "I have given you this land; and all the Gentiles will come and bring their money in." He can't give that land away to the heathen. He's not about to, as a believer.

But many of them who read the Old Testament this way, were very much colored, not so much by the Apocrypha, as by ideas which we'll see represented in the Apocrypha.

Then Jesus gets up and says, "Pray for your enemies." And they say, "Well, You aren't going to lead us against the Romans. You're not the Messiah." And if you want to know why they rejected Christ, read the Apocrypha. He simply did not measure up to the picture of the Messiah that they were all looking forward to. "Pray for your enemies. Bless them," you know. "Turn the other cheek."

They said, "Well, let's go look for another Messiah. He's never going to set up the Kingdom." Because they thought His Kingdom was of this world. And so did the first members of the first

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General Conference Committee. You know, our forerunners. Didn't they expect Him to set up a kingdom here? In fact, two of them got their mother to come and -- you know, it's an old idea, that you get your mother to twist the arm of the Lord. Especially if you can have the Lord's mother do that. And so James and John brought their mother - to intercede for them - that the two of them might hold high position in this kingdom.

And then when Jesus died, they knew He wasn't the one to set up the kingdom. And even those two saints on the road to Emmaus said, "We thought He would be the one."

So you see, even the saints who we see as starting this whole movement we belong to, they didn't see it either. So let's be very sympathetic; to this day there are many devout Jews who read the Bible a great deal, who cannot see this thing, though many are puzzled.

I asked a rabbi once, after attending his service for a whole evening: "When Israel is fully restored, do you think the sacrificial system should be restored, revived?" And he said, "I hope not. It was a very bloody business. We're still looking for the Messiah, but I hope we don't do that."

Which was sort of a tentative feeling. You know, he doesn't know what's going to happen next. I would anticipate that more Pauls could come in. The Jews, you know, many of them are mighty in the scriptures. They could put us to shame, the way they know their Bibles. If somehow, it could all come together in the right way. And we're not going to do it by insulting Jews. You cannot antagonize and persuade at the same time.

So when we talk about "the sins of the Jews", because the Bible is full of them, we ought to make it plain: we are the direct spiritual descendants, aren't we? And doing the same thing. And I hope that comes across.

I found the main objection, though, to painting the picture of the failure of the Jews, comes not from religious Jews, but say, the Antidefamation League. Or B'nai B'rith. Because even from this book I got a letter or two: "How dare you suggest the Jews were legalists?" Well, I said, "it's your own prophets that said so." They said, "We don't care what the prophets say. We don't believe them either. You are saying rude things about the Jews."

I am thinking of Jews who revere the scriptures just as much as we do. And you know, aren't there people like that? They revere the scriptures just as much as we do. And somehow, it hasn't been brought together.

Paul said, "I'd give my life to persuade my kinsmen according to the flesh." And I think we ought to feel that way about the Jews. So near, and yet so far. So something hasn't rung a bell with them.

Venden: Question right here to your left; second row.

Maxwell: Yes.

Comment: I had a flight student that was a Jewess. And she was also dating at the same time a Jewish fellow. And he was the one who owned the airplane. Rather unique setup. But we were invited to their wedding. And to go to a Jewish wedding was really, really quite interesting.

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And then we wanted to do something real nice for her. So, you know, for their gift, we gave them Steps to Christ. And we've been enemies ever since!

Maxwell: Enemies.

Comment: Oh, she just really, "How could you do that?" she says, "do this when we were such close friends?" She says, "You've destroyed our friendship."

Maxwell: I'm glad there are stories to the contrary. A medical student - I must be careful - but I have great admiration for what he has done. He is a Jew. And during the years that he was here, he was attracted to this picture of God; and just so enthusiastic about it, that when he was baptized in our church, he said, "I want to make a statement." And he made a beautiful statement about God, one of the best I've ever heard.

And do you think he still loves all his relatives? And do you think they love him? They came to his graduation. They came to his wedding. You bet they're there. And they are leaving the impression that perhaps, had they thought that God was like this before, maybe they'd be where he is. See, there are different ways of expressing our beliefs, you know. Some are much more attractive than others. And maybe we have not made it easy for Jews to see it, that the God of Abraham - Abraham was God's best friend, you know — is the one we admire; exactly the same. And Abraham is our Number One hero back then. And Moses and all the rest.

So I think we'll do a better job someday. And I think that many Jews will say, "That's really what I would have like to have found in the Bible earlier myself."

But this student is exercising a marvelous influence with his friends and relatives who are Jews. But they're saying, "That's what I've always heard Christianity to be," is the thing.

Comment: You mentioned about this combination of Jewish, Catholic and Protestant that collaborated in getting the translations.

Maxwell: Yes.

Comment: Did those Jews that were on that committee, also help in translating the New Testament; or did they say, "Well, here's where we quit"?

Maxwell: No. Because some Jews — see, there are many kinds of Jews, as you know. There's the Orthodox Jew. And if you ladies want to worship with the Orthodox Jew, you will not be permitted to come in there and disturb the men at worship. If you meet with the Conservative Jews, then men and women can sit together in church service. Then there are the Reformed Jews, who may not even keep Sabbath at all. So there are different kinds of Jews. I can't imagine the Orthodox Jew translating the New Testament; no.

Now, in the new Anchor Bible - as I mentioned, thirty-six volumes have come already. Genesis was done by a Jewish scholar. Spizer [sp?] is his name. And when he came, as I mentioned to you, to Genesis 2:7, "God breathed into man the breath of life, and man became a living being." Marvelous, you see.

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And so when it finished five of the volumes in the Torah, which has the same reading, same reading — the same man did it in this Jewish translation, did the first one in the Anchor Bible, being done jointly by Protestants, Catholics and Jews — reporters came from Newsweek and Time, to the chairman of the committee of the Torah translation - Rabbi Olinski - and said, "Anything unusual about your version?"

"Well," he said, "there's one thing you'll be surprised. We've dropped the word 'soul.' Because," he said, "'soul' has come to mean something the Bible writers never understood - some separable essence that could be wafted off to Heaven, you know, to enjoy the music without any ears, and the food without any stomach, and commune with God without any brain or nervous system. But the Bible writers never conceived of that. The Hebrew word is "nephesh". And he said, "'Nephesh' means the whole person; even the blood in his veins."

And they put that in Newsweek and Time. Which I of course tore out and put in my file. That's from a Jewish scholar translating Genesis. So don't spend too much time arguing about "soul" in the Bible, when the best scholars are agreeing - Protestants, Catholics and Jews, alike - that the word in Genesis is a living person and not soul.

And so some versions read, "God breathed into man the breath of life, and man began to live"; or "man became a living person," or "man became a living creature." And I'm quoting from Protestant, Catholic and Jewish translations — all three. So why waste a lot of time arguing about the soul, when biblical scholars agree that the biblical word means the person - even the blood in his veins. So, good progress made just on one verse, there.

But it's so nice to say, "Let me do this from the Anchor Bible. Ummm. Jointly produced by Protestants, Catholics and Jews. I mean, they have some special authority. It's a bit expensive. Fortunately, they send a volume when it's ready - which is several months apart. And I've been getting mine for maybe thirteen years, I think. And 36 have arrived so far. If they came all at once, that would be a problem!

Comment: Couldn't the Bible have been written so it doesn't take quite as much faith to believe in God?

Maxwell: Oh, in what way? Say more. That could be taken many ways.

Comment: Do you think maybe that there are things that were written that have been lost carelessly by people?

Maxwell: In the Bible, you mean? From the Bible?

Comment: Yes. And then how do you know that. . .

Maxwell: You're all right! I mean, you've got something going there. Well, for example, how do you know some things haven't been left out? [Comment: Yeah.] How do you know some things haven't got in that shouldn't be in there, maybe? [Comment: Well, no. . .] Or the other way around more?

Comment: You've examined that. You know, you sort of have to compare. But wouldn't it solve a lot of problems, if God had said a little bit more? And. . .

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Maxwell: Or maybe a whole lot less, maybe. You know, in this great controversy over His character and government; by ordinary human methods, God should have hired a firm on Madison Avenue to improve His image - that He's a God who cares for people, or something like that, you know. And when you think of all the criticisms leveled against Him, then the image-makers would create an image. And God did not go that route.

In fact, what God has done is to recount the history of His involvement in what went wrong. And most of the time you say, "God, if You want to look good, don't go drowning all but eight! At least, if You do it, don't record it!

The ancient monarchs, you know, when they faced an emergency that they didn't want on the record, they eliminated it. Anytime an ancient monarch was defeated in battle, he just skipped it.

So if you want to get the true history of what happened in Egypt, you have to get the history of the king next door, who was keeping all the victories in but skipping his defeats. So you have to take all the histories, with all the victories and all the defeats, to get a full history. Because no king is going to keep the defeats on the record.

In the Bible, God puts down everything. Like in the Flood; it says, "It repented God, that He had made man." An English version would say, "God was sorry." Now, we have to work on that. What does that mean, that He was sorry? Did He change His mind? Or did He know this was going to happen? And that's what we'll deal with next time and some to come.

I believe the fact that God has included all of these difficulties in the Bible, really speaks well of His credibility. I mean, this is no way to whitewash people. Think of putting those things in the record! He's left them there for us to work on. Now He does mention - the Bible does mention - many times, "There's more on this subject in the book of Nathan the Prophet." And there are about twenty-four books mentioned that we don't have. Now, whether they were inspired or not, we don't know. But they're not included.

Of course, I'd rather go with John. He says, "If everything were to be recorded, there would not be enough room in the whole world for the books that could be written." So somehow, the Sixty-six have persevered; though there were many others. Think of all the things that Jesus said, that are not on the record. Precious things He said.

Comment: Aren't there some things we have available right now, just won't be able to answer?

Maxwell: Well, that's the next thing. I'd want to work on them and say, "Well, I could have got along without this. I could have got along without that. For example, there are two books that don't even mention You by name." God is not mentioned in Esther; and He's not mentioned in the Song of Solomon. And some people would love to get rid of Judges and a few other places.

And God says, "No, this is what I have preserved." By the way, there have been many attempts to destroy the scriptures. And you see the hand of Providence in preserving these things. Why would you preserve two books that don't even mention Him? I mean, what could you learn from Esther, where God isn't even mentioned, and nobody even prays?

Well, one is not looking for statements; those are only claims. One is looking for a history of the

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record of what God has done. And we add it all up. I would be sorry to give up Esther. And Song of Solomon we did this week in class. I would be sorry to give that up, for what it says about God.

Personally, there isn't a thing in the Bible, that I know of, I would want to get along without. Now, that's where you should be free to raise any question about anything; and see: are twisting it to fit it in? Or are we honestly taking everything in the Bible, and finding it is a full and adequate model?

Venden: OK, we have a. . . [referring to next questioner]

Maxwell: Be best if you could raise some problems one of these times, you know, and we'd test it.

TURN TO SIDE 2

Comment: Are we still under the Leviticus law? Because, like in Leviticus 11, it talks about the unclean and clean food. And then in the New Testament, in Romans, it talks about that nothing's unclean to you, as long as you give thanks to the Lord for it.

Maxwell: Yeah, including salamanders, and arsenic. . . .

Comment: Well, the main thing I was talking about, like pork and stuff like that, because in Isaiah 66 — I can't remember what chapter it's in. . .

Maxwell: Oh, you're all right. No, you raised a very legitimate question.

Comment: In Isaiah 66 it talks about they were performing abominations in front of the Lord by eating flesh of the swine.

Maxwell: One has to go back and re-create the whole historical setting for the list of clean and unclean meats. And the same thing in Romans, and Corinthians, and Mark, and Timothy. One has to re-create the setting behind all those words.

Now, to show that we're not afraid to do it, it says in Romans: "As for the man who is weak in faith; welcome him, but not for disputes about opinions. The man who is strong in faith can eat anything. But the man who is weak in faith eats only vegetables." And the chapter goes on to say, "Nothing is unclean in itself. It's only unclean to the man who thinks that it's unclean."

So you move over to I Corinthians 8 and 10: "Eat whatever you find in the meat market, without raising any question on the ground of conscience. And if an unbeliever invites you to dinner, and you are disposed to go, eat whatever is put before you, without raising any question on the ground of conscience. But if he should say, 'This meat was offered in sacrifice to an idol,' then don't eat it for conscience' sake." I mean, his conscience, not yours. Because you know food offered to an idol isn't changed at all.

And then you turn over to Mark. Jesus says, "'It is not that which goes into the mouth that defiles a man. But that which comes out of the mouth defiles a man.' This He said, declaring all foods clean."

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And then you turn to Timothy which says, "In the last days, people will arise, teaching the doctrines of demons, and saying that we should abstain from foods which God has given to be received with thanksgiving."

And you put all that together, and say - well, what do you say? Well, you have to go back. I was reading here a little and there a little. And one should read the whole chapter in Romans, and all of I Corinthians 8, and all of I Corinthians 10, and all of Mark there where He's talking about that subject.

And none of it has to do with healthful living and diet. It all has to do with ceremonial cleanliness and uncleanness. And the Jews, like many Gentiles, believed that when food was offered to an idol, it was somehow changed and became impure. And if you ate it after being offered to an idol, the suggestion was that you were really in effect, worshipping the idol.

And that's why Daniel says, "I won't eat any of that food. I'll only eat the food that isn't offered to idols" - which happened to be vegetables. Heathen deities have very rarely been vegetarian. They prefer meat and wine.

And so Daniel said, "I won't eat the meat and the wine. Give me the pulse," the King James says: "give me the vegetables." Now, that was not for health reasons. It worked out well for him. Because it mentions how healthy he was. But he did not want to eat this food, which would be taken to mean that he was accepting the idols, and the images of Babylon.

Now Paul comes along and says, "Now this food offered to idols: Some of you are afraid to eat it, because you think the idols have changed it." He says, "Idols are made of wood and stone; they don't affect the food. Go ahead and eat it. In fact, he says, "if you're afraid to eat it, you're suggesting the idols are for real."

So here's an interesting thing in the Bible: Daniel said, "I won't eat it, to show my rejection of the idols." Paul says, "I will eat it, to show my rejection of the idols." They both were rejecting idols.

Now, we haven't gotten around to health yet, except incidentally on the side. I think with the food in the clean and unclean meats, that's an entirely different story. When they came out of Egypt, enjoying the food they'd had, God gave them "angels' food". He gave them manna from heaven, which fell six days a week, and double on Friday; but didn't fall on Sabbath, which is one way to locate the Sabbath, you know. From God doing it Himself.

God says, "This is the day; two layers on Friday, so you'll know when the seventh day is." It's a very interesting part of the story. And after awhile, they got tired of it. And they said to God, and to Moses, "We cannot stand this worthless stuff! Give us the food of Egypt. I mean, give us the onions, the leeks," and - I rather like this, because I'm allergic to onions; which means it's no virtue that I don't eat the leeks of Egypt. The cucumbers, which I love - that would be a problem. And the other foods.

And God said, "Don't you want the manna? I'm giving you angels' food here; and you'd rather have the other?" They said, "Yes, we prefer the other." So the God who said, "You don't want a king, do you? Let Me be your king." They insisted; He gave them a king. He didn't want them to divorce. They insisted; He gave them divorce laws. He didn't want them to fight. They insisted;

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He helped them fight.

When they insisted on the food of Egypt, He said, "All right, I hope it makes you so sick, you'll come groveling back to Me, begging for manna." That's not the way God is! God said, "All right. If you must eat the food of Egypt, don't eat all of it. Eat this, but don't eat that." And some say, "He's recommending the clean!" My picture would be, He recommends the manna. But He can't force people. Ever try forcing your children to eat spinach - and smile while they do it? I mean, you can't do it.

So God says, "If you must have your own way, all right; I'll even help you from getting too sick." And so He said, "Eat the clean but not the unclean." And that, I believe, is for hygienic reasons at the time. But then, you see, if we take the Bible as a whole, and God wishes us well now, there's nothing arbitrary about this.

So I look over that list, and I perceive there are some things on the clean side that are so high in cholesterol, I'd be dumb to eat it! And so, in the highest sense of freedom I would say, "All right there are things on the clean side that wouldn't be good for me. And that's my choice. And nobody's ordering me around."

But that has to do there, I think, with health. But even then, the food He gave is not nearly as important as the revelation about God. He says, "Look, I can't make you enjoy angels' food anyway. If you must eat the other, I don't want you to get too sick, so let Me help you. Let Me help you pick your king, let me help you fight, let Me help you even get divorced."

And they say, "Oh great, He's for divorce." So Jesus comes along, and they ask Him, "How come Moses gave us divorce - and You seem to be opposed?" He said, "Moses didn't give you that rule. I did."

See, all the law of Moses — it says all those rules and regulations were given by God to Moses. Then God gave the provisions for divorce.

And Jesus said, "Let Me tell you what My position is on that. If you'd read Malachi, you'd know I hate divorce. It says so right there. Then why did I give it? Because of the stiffness of your necks and the hardness of your hearts. And at least, it was a much better method than you were using. Because in those days, when you were tired of your wife, you simply sent her home." He said, "That's not decent. That's not humane. If you're going to get rid of them, do it decently." So He gave them some decent divorce laws as an emergency measure. But He really didn't want to do it at all.

Now, I'm mentioning too many things. Except the message in it all is the picture of God. It isn't so much the provision itself. It isn't so much to me the list of clean and unclean meats, as what it says about God, that He'd say, "If you must eat it, let Me help you so you don't get too sick. Let Me help you fight. Let Me help you have a king. Let Me help you divorce. And I wish you weren't doing any of it."

So once again, it may illustrate going through the whole Bible all the time. I'd want to fit it all together. Are we under the Levitical rules? Why are we not offering the sacrifices that they did? Did they point forward to the day when the real Sacrifice would [take place]?

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You know, things like that — we think it all through and say, What would be the point of continuing it? And even circumcision had come to the place where it was such a legalistic badge, that Paul said, "Let's not do it anymore; away with it; let's stop it, for ceremonial reasons."

There's a consistency there. But you - two times you've asked a very good question. You asked a very good one this time. Does that worry you at all, the consistency?

Comment: Well, no, I was just kind of really worried about it, because in Leviticus, you know, it says that you're not supposed to. Cause, you know, like I eat pork and stuff.

Maxwell: Yes.

Comment: And then, you know, then I read in Romans, and Corinthians, and stuff, that it's OK, you know, that . . .

Maxwell: But both Romans and Corinthians doesn't say you can go and eat pork. All it's talking about, is eating food offered to idols. See, it has nothing to do with diet in those chapters. He's not discussing health and hygiene. He's discussing whether or not to eat food offered to idols. And Paul says, "Sure you can. No problem."

Comment: . . . where it says like, "You can go into the meat market, and . . .

Maxwell: Yeah, the reason for that was - now, to extend this too much. But this was in Corinth. And the archaeologists have dug up the marketplace. They found the meat market. Now you see, in the King James it says, "Eat whatever thou dost find in the shambles." And nobody knows what shambles are, except what your teenager does in his bedroom. And so it doesn't worry anybody. But the Greek word is, "the place where meat is cut." So eat whatever you find in the meat market.

Now saints really sit up in their seats: "So I can eat whatever I find in the meat market."

Well, they've also found the stores - the little shops - where produce would be hung beneath the floor, where water would run through to keep it fresh, you know. Then they found the shrines all around where the meat - not vegetables - but the meat and the wine would be offered to the deities. We also know about the deities they worshiped in Corinth. Those mystery deities. And as you pass by the shrine, they would not only be offering the meat and the wine to the gods, but serving it as food. And you would be attended by - not Bible teachers and instructors - but women who were dedicated prostitutes—cult prostitutes. And that's how you could come preciously near and dear to your saviour. This is a cruel perversion of Christianity.

So when the saints went to market to buy food, they passed through all of this. And they came down to the market, and here was the food. And Paul is saying: "I know some of you are scared to buy that meat, because it's been offered to idols. Let me tell you about idols. They're nothing! They don't affect it at all. So eat it - that is, if you understand. But if a new convert comes by and sees you buying this food, and he thinks you're buying it out of respect for the idols, then his conscience, being weak, will be defiled, and you, a man of faith, have destroyed a child, a babe in the truth for whom Christ died."

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So Paul says, "If that's the case, I won't eat any meat or drink any wine as long as I live. Imitate me as I imitate Christ."

And none of this has to do with health. It's all about eating these ceremonially unclean foods. Well, I'm sure you'd be satisfied if you could read all of that and see the situation. It's different from some of those rules in the Old Testament.

Comment: Concerning the view that the Jews might have had at the time about Christ: inasmuch as they may have viewed Him as a rabble-rouser, did they keep anything in writing saying something about Christ, or something [not clear]?

Maxwell: Oh, that's very interesting. What's on the record? No, there's very little on the record. We'd like to have some nice historical references to Him. Now, I could have read from the Apocryphal New Testament, some nice references, you see. But they have no authority.

Have you read the description of Christ, what He looked like? Well, have you read the description of Paul, what He looked like? Many have adopted that description. These are apocryphal. Which means they may be true; they may not.

But the only real testimony as to the existence and identity of Jesus, comes from Josephus. It's called the Testimonium Flavianum. That is, Flavius Josephus' testimony. But since it was only kept in copies of his writings preserved by Christians, scholars are pretty sure the Christians doctored that up so they could have something to answer your question.

So I'd rather live without it and say, "We don't have anything." There's very little extra outside the Bible record. Ah, there are little hints. The Quest for the Historical Jesus, a famous book that was written, you remember, by the great Schweitzer? There have been many books since that time.

Let's see, I got a paperback not too long ago, on historical facts that support the existence and Personhood of Christ outside of scripture. And there's a lot of little bits there, but wouldn't you expect a whole lot more?

I think He disappointed them so much. Who was thrilled, outside of those who wrote the New Testament? Now, they wrote. See, those who got the message sat down and really wrote! And Luke does say, "There's been a lot of writing going on; and some of it's accurate, and some of it isn't; so I have researched all these records, that you may have the truth." You remember in the first paragraph of Luke?

He said, "Inasmuch as many have taken it in hand to write out the record." Who's "many"? Matthew and Mark? John's not written yet. Two isn't many. So evidently, Luke was confronted with many, many records at the time - maybe many of them oral, over the back fence. He said, "I have researched them carefully, that you may know the truth, O Theophilus, as to what has happened among us."

Then some of it filtered into the Apocrypha and got all muddled up there. And of course, some of it's in the Apostolic Fathers, and on down, until the fathers of the church. But the only ones who wrote with great enthusiasm, were the ones we find in the New Testament.

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What's interesting to me, is what disappointed them so much, besides what I mentioned, on not being willing to fight the Romans. "If My kingdom were of this world, My servants would fight," He told Pilate, you remember. I think His very first sentence in the Sermon on the Mount confused them, and turned many of them off. "Blessed are the poor." That's the most ridiculous thing to the Jews of the day! Poor people blessed? Why are they poor? Because they're not blessed.

There's a whole book on that subject. That's the book of Job. Why was Job so poor? Because he'd sinned. Isn't that what the theologians told him? "Now, when you were a saint, you were the richest man around. Now, we don't know what you did," the three of them said to Job, "but you must have done something terrible! Because we've never seen anybody suffering so much. We've never seen anyone poorer than you. You've lost everything; sitting on a dungheap; with your children dead; and you've got boils."

And he said, "I don't think I've done anything to merit that." Which is not a self-righteous statement. He was right, and they were wrong. But they assumed, according to the theology that has prevailed for hundreds of years and does to this day, that if you're rich, it's because you're blessed. And you're blessed because you're good. And this is why through the years in human society, the rich have not felt too great a burden to share their riches for the poor. Because they're poor because they deserve it; they're bad. They have misbehaved.

So Jesus gets up and says, "Blessed are the poor." And that's why the poor heard Him gladly.

Now, I'd want to test this many places. "It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle" - thinking of Peter's story - "than for a rich man to get into the Kingdom."

And they said, "Well, if a rich man can't be saved, who can?" What they meant was, "Rich people are rich because they're blessed. And they're blessed because they're good. And You say it's hard for a rich man? You're saying it's hard for a good man, that it's hard for a blessed man, to get into the Kingdom. Well," they said, "if a good man can't get in, who can?"

You see how they got it backwards? And that theology prevailed all through scripture in misunderstanding, and right down to the present time. And that's why many people who read Job, miss the point, and say that Job truly needed to repent at the end. And he didn't. God said, "You have done splendidly. You have said of Me what is right. And I told the Universe you were a perfect and an upright man. And you still are. And those theologians who have this legalistic view, are wrong."

Well, that's just the first sentence in the Sermon on the Mount. By the time He got down a few lines into the Sermon on the Mount, He knew He was losing much of His audience. Because they did not read the Old Testament this way. And so He stopped, and gave the verse I had on the sheet today: "Think not that I have come to destroy the Old Testament. I know you've got Me contradicting at every point in My Sermon on the Mount, so far. I'm not come to destroy the Law and the Prophets. I've come to explain it, to fulfil it, to tell you what it's all about."

But they wouldn't listen; and finally they killed Him, rather than accept His explanation.

Venden: You're saying then, that we don't have a lot of other references, because the reporters from the Jerusalem Times got that far and said, "Well, there's nothing to this," and went on

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home without a report.

Maxwell: There's nothing to this; it's going to fizzle out. And even the early Christians thought it had fizzled out, you remember? Some of them. I suppose the devil too would have a hand in keeping those records out.

Venden: There's a lady back there - a lady from Michigan, who is heading back to Detroit soon - wants to ask a question.

Comment: I was wondering. Do you think that we have all the knowledge that the Bible is trying to give us in the prophets. And is there - do we really know what's going to happen? [Do we have it] all?

Maxwell: Yes. You said two things there. One is, Do we have all the knowledge we'd need to have or could have? And then, Do we know all that's going to happen? Personally, I'm not too worried about what's going to happen. Because I like Jesus' words: "I tell you these things beforehand, so that when they happen, you may think back and reflect, and it will strengthen your faith."

And I don't see the prophets spending very much time outlining future events. And we've often tried to use the prophets that way. And so we're always updating our schedule. We're updating our charts, you know. Got to move it; the king of the North has changed to somebody else.

A prophet is a person who speaks for God; speaks in God's behalf. That's the very meaning of the word. And I see rather, prophets who don't make any predictions whatever, exercising their most important prophetic office; they're speaking for God. Like Hosea, and Amos, and some of those others. Marvelous pictures of God.

And I think of the two things we might stop doing so much of: One, using the Bible as a codebook, of deeds to be done, sins to be shunned, items to be believed. And also using it as foreteller of the future schedule of events; then we might use the rest of it - which is about 95% - for which it was originally intended. And that's the picture of God. I think that's the main message in scripture.

Comment: I heard somebody saying, "Well, we don't have to start worrying about the end-times, until they start building a 'tower'?"

Maxwell: Well, people have picked various and sundry things like this, and you have to update them all the time. That's the difficulty. To give you a classic illustration: Daniel 12:4, that in the time of the end, "many shall run to and fro, and knowledge shall be increased."

And so, instead of studying the Bible, we study newspapers. And we find that through the years, people have been running to and fro a little faster, and a little faster; and knowledge has been increasing and increasing. And you see, this week for the first time, somebody, untethered, walked in space. "At last, we have the fulfillment of Daniel 12:4!"

Well, we've been doing this every few years. And if you want a history of this, you get all the covers of our prophetic journals -like the one that meant so much to our family, Signs of the Times. And there was the first Signs cover, that showed men running to and fro, and knowledge

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increasing. And here's an old locomotive - chuffing slowly across the page. But that was stunning at the time.

And then a little later on, the trains become a little more streamlined. And here's the first automobile, put-put-put across. "My, it must be the last days! Men rushing to and fro, and knowledge increasing."

And the cars got more streamlined, and the first airplane appeared. And those little cloth things, you know, barely flying across the page. Everyone says, "Ah, it must be the end. Men rushing to and fro." And then they got more streamlined.

And then there was the first rocket, and Sputnik was up there. My, when Sputnik got up there, the word went out to the Art Department: "Brethren, update Daniel 12:4!" You see, every few years — update Daniel 12:4; and they'd paint another picture.

Now we've got men on the moon. So update, you see. I wonder after this one. Somebody out in space, untethered. Why, if he'd had enough fuel, and he'd known where Heaven was, he could have taken off - and get there ahead of us, you know. Men are running to and fro.

So what we need to do, is stop reading the newspapers, and read the Bible. And if you turn to Daniel 12; Daniel has been told to seal up some things that pertain to closing events. But in the time of the end, men would run to and fro. And the Hebrew says, urgently, as if looking for something.

And you look over in Amos. It says, "There'll be a famine for the word in the end; and men will be running to and fro, searching for the word." Same word.

So that in the last days, there'd be an eagerness to learn the meaning of what was sealed up. And as a result, knowledge? No, the knowledge. And in the Hebrew, that means knowledge already referred to. Which would mean that in the time of the end, there would be a diligent searching for the meaning of the things that were sealed up. And as a result, knowledge of the prophecies of Daniel would be increased. And if we're right in the schedule some of us have, around 1798 many things were put together; and there was a tremendous study of the prophecies. And that's where the Seventh-day Church came from. Along with the great Advent movement all over the world. We're not the only ones, of course.

And I'd say, that's the fulfillment. Which means that Daniel 12:4 was fulfilled close on two hundred years ago. Which leaves us with the question: What are we still doing here? But I don't think we can look for more signs and events. We've had them all. We're living in an emergency period where God is ready, but we're not. And that's very provocative to think about.

Comment: You've said, you know, we're in the closing time, but if time will last - you think about several hundred years from now we'll have bigger Bibles?

Maxwell: Bigger Bibles? Oh, I don't . . .

Comment: Some of the theologians might write some more, and it would be Canonized?

Maxwell: Well, whether it will be Canonized or not, it may be mighty good stuff if it is. There's

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nothing to say there couldn't be any more. Nothing says that. Oh, I know, some take Revelation 22, which says you may not add to or take from. That does not refer to the Sixty-six. That refers to the book of Revelation only. You know how that is. I mean, the Bible didn't exist like this, and then John pasted his in, and said, "Now, nobody may add to this." They were all in little separate scrolls, you know. So it doesn't refer to that.

Well, this raises the question of two Friday nights from now, the question of authority. I mean, if the ultimate authority is truth, I don't care where it comes from. So I'm not worried about that. How much is written - I'm going to weigh every bit of it. And if it's not true, I'm not going to believe it. If it's true, then it has authority for me.

I hope they don't make it any bigger though; because look at the trouble people have with the one we've got. I really believe we don't need another thing beyond what's in here.

Now, we've had some marvelous people of insight who have commented on this. And I see the Spirit guiding them in writing magnificent things about what's in here. And then I admire them enormously. And I think the same Spirit was working with them, to be sure.

But we don't need to tack it on and say we need more; as if the picture here were not enough. And that's why we can go to people all over the world and say, "Let's take the same Bible. We all have it. It belongs to everyone of us. Let's work with this."

But in my library at home, I may have the writings of people of marvelous insight. And as an Adventist, there is one person who I think had more insight than anybody. I love what she wrote. But it has authority only because I find it in full harmony with this. I don't have to make a choice there. I could do it with this. That's why in our Conversations here, you see, we're using this.

Comment: When we read the Bible from beginning to end there are many places, like the genealogy, for instance. And I know why they're there - to inspire confidence, that this really started from Adam and went all the way through. So, you know, how do you read those inspirational readings, for instance?

Maxwell: Well, you might not read them for inspirational. . . unless you have enough time to read enough of it. It depends on what inspires you the most. Well, I don't think you'll ever just read forty "begats" and then - what would the lesson be?

I think it has to do with the most believable thing God has done. He has not made statements; He has not made claims. He has involved Himself in human history. And He has inspired a record of it all. Much of it looks as if it puts Him in a bad light. And He's willing to let it all be put down there - which I find very believable.

But I would not know why He has spoken the way He has sometimes - or acted the way He has sometimes. Like one time He thunders and terrifies people. The next time, He speaks softly, even cries. Another time He says, "Stone Achan and his family." Another time He says to the woman taken in adultery, "Just go home and be a better girl from now on."

And so I have to re-create the setting. So until I can re-create the historical setting, I'm not in a position to understand why God does things this way this time, and this way another time. So I value every tiny historical detail in the Bible that helps me re-create the setting.

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And in the genealogies, if you notice, just the names are valuable. Historians of the Bible really use those genealogies, you know, to re-create the historical setting. It has a very important effect in our re-creation of the history. Though also many little details in there. Even in one genealogy, there are comments about this man Achan who was stoned, not mentioned elsewhere. So I have found in my own experience, I wouldn't want to waste anything.

But these historical details that seem so mundane and earthly; they are so essential, if one understands the way God has revealed Himself. If He's just making statements, what on earth do you need all the historical details for? But if He's revealing Himself under certain circumstances, I'd better know what the circumstances are. So I read everything I can about what the circumstances were at the foot of Sinai. And no wonder He approached them the way He did.

But then I read on another occasion — well, even Paul in his letters. I believe he has the same message in all his letters. But it sounds a little different in each one. Because when he's writing to Corinth, he's not writing to Judaizers with that background. He's writing to people who were coming in from the mystery religions, with all those amazing beliefs, where there was a lot of immorality, and a lot of drinking and speaking in tongues, when you were "full of the Spirit" you got it out of a goatskin.

And so when you know that background and you read his epistle, then it makes sense. Like we were discussing awhile ago on the foods. We need details - everything we can learn about Corinth and those other places.

So when the Bible seems to be wasting space on little mundane details, to me, that's helping me re-create the setting and the circumstances so I can understand why God so acted and so spoke.

So it has to do with one's understanding of how God has sought to convince us that He's trustworthy. Has He claimed it? Or has He revealed Himself in a historical record, under many circumstances, some of them very difficult? That's why I see them as valuable.

Venden: All right, our time is up, Graham. And we can extend the warm-hearted invitation to come again. Sorry there are two or three that I think I caught hands on, that we weren't able to get back to you. You'll understand?

Maxwell: Don't forget them, yeah.

Venden: Yes. Right. And some of you who've had an opportunity, we sort of give opportunity to others before we come back to a second chance. I hope that's agreeable.

Once again, we'd appreciate it if you would lead us in a word of closing prayer.

Maxwell: Our Loving Father in Heaven,

What a pleasure again to meet with friends - of each other here, but also of Thine. As we look through the Biblical record, we find mention of individuals of whom Thou hast been able to speak with pride before the family of the universe. That Abraham was Thy trusted friend. And Moses. Now, even though they let Thee down, how gracious Thou art to take us back. If Thou

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canst speak well of us, Thou dost seem to be so eager to do so. Thy commendations of Job and others in the record.

We would like to be such friends of Thine. We cannot be a friend, though, with someone we do not know. And so we thank Thee for the whole Biblical record. Not of claims, but of demonstration. Of seeing Thee involved in many and various ways. To clear it all up, even becoming a human like us, and getting hungry and tired. And yet, the disciples eventually realized they had been with God those three and a half years.

Surely such a God as this can be trusted. We wish we could be trusted. Surely we have every reason to want to have such a relationship with Thee. And we do pray that these Conversations may clarify and warm up the picture that we have of Thee. That with not only conviction, but with deep feeling, we may be prepared to say to Thee again and again, "We love Thee. We trust Thee. We admire Thee for Thy wise and gracious ways. And we would consider it the highest of privileges and joys, to live with such a Ruler for eternity."

So bless us in our Friday evening talks together, we pray, In Jesus name, Amen.

CONVERSATIONS ABOUT GOD #5: QUESTIONS

Louis Venden and A. Graham Maxwell

Venden: We haven't had an occasion of anyone wanting to burn a new version in quite some time as far as I know. Unless someone wanted to burn the *Reader's Digest Bible*. I thought it ought to be burned.

Maxwell: I think if society would permit it, we'd see more of it. We have this much improvement, though: In Tyndale's day, they burned the translator. In modern times, they burn the translation. That's an improvement. Now they cremate people in the press as we talk about them.

Venden: In a way, Graham, I can understand the frustration of a person who says, "Well, wouldn't it be better to get rid of all these versions? They are so confusing. Why are there so many? I go down to the religious book store, and I say 'I would like to buy a Bible.'" It's not that simple, you see. "Well now, what version do you want?" How do you answer this problem of confusion that is created by all these versions?

Maxwell: It's a pity that such a blessing is perceived as a confusion. I think a lot depends on how much one knows about the Source of the Bible. If it had been written in our language, maybe one version would be enough. But when you look at the Greek and the Hebrew and the Aramaic, you realize that the same phrase can be translated in different ways. Like, "Be ye therefore perfect," in Matthew 5:48. Now is that a command, or is it a promise? You cannot tell from the Greek. It is very difficult to bring the ambiguity over into English. And this is where Goodspeed shows himself such a master. His English translation is, "You are to be perfect." You understand? You are to be perfect. Wonderful promise. You will be perfect, you are to be perfect. But most versions would say it either one way or the other. So in view of the difficulty of bringing ambiguity over, I don't want to read one version that would give me only one possibility. I want to get all the possibilities that are available.

Venden: I noticed you spoke of Goodspeed as - that you sometimes thought that was your favorite. But that almost speaks of a bit of frustration on your part saying, "Well, today this one is my favorite, but tomorrow it may not be." How do you - well, which one is the most trustworthy and reliable?

Maxwell: *that one sixty-one years old now. It's simply incredible that Goodspeed has held up so well. I mean, he did the New Testament and the Apocrypha. He did not do the Old. In the Chicago Bible, a group of others under Dr. Smith did the Old. That's why it's called the Smith-Goodspeed Bible sometimes. Which is my favorite? Is that what you mean? Or which do I really trust? You know, it all depends on what you use it for.

Venden: I'm going to get my pen out and write it down. This is the final word by a New Testament scholar.

Maxwell: * If I am at home tonight, if I want put my feet up and read something inspiring, it's still difficult to beat Philip's. Absolutely marvelous. But now, if I want to - well, I'll be doing my lesson late tonight, getting ready for the morning. And because I'll have the original out in front of me but using versions, I'll probably be using the Revised Standard much of the time. It has proved to be - though it was burned in 1952 - it has proved to be one of the most precise, conservative, safe English translations ever.

Venden: Can I answer?*/ask a question just out of my own wondering: Do you think that a

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group translation, a committee translation, is maybe a little more reliable than an individual?

Maxwell: Ah, that's a very useful question. It may be a little more dull. For example, when the Revised Standard Version was being prepared, they always had to have a two-thirds vote before they would arrive at a conclusion. Often, Goodspeed was on the committee and so was Moffatt. They would disagree with the two-thirds vote, so when it was all over, Goodspeed wrote a book, Problems in Bible Translation, to list the one hundred or so places where he was voted down. And it's very exciting reading. So if you have an individual, he has a little more freedom. So an individual translation, in spots, may be more correct. Because they had to arrive at a compromise to carry the two-thirds vote. You know, textbooks written by committees aren't as exciting as books written by an individual.

Venden: Who use their personal * . . .

Maxwell: Exactly. So I like all kinds.

Venden: Well, I can't help but wonder if maybe we need to learn Hebrew and Greek, and are you ready to start teaching us classes? Could that be the only real answer to the problem, if we can read it in the original for ourselves?

Maxwell: Well, I like to medical and dental and nursing students that I hope they won't spend as much time studying Hebrew and Aramaic and Greek as I have. Because when I come with a pain somewhere, I do not wish a disposition on the Biblical languages. I want help. So let them study their specialty. Let me study mine. And I will go to them when I need help, and they are welcome to phone me when they need help on the Biblical languages. This is a time for specialization. I think because of the existence of these wonderful translations, it isn't necessary for most people to study the languages. But there ought to be somebody in the community whom you could phone when a technical problem arises.

Venden: You are saying, then, that the multiplicity of versions in a way is a real strength.

Maxwell: Ah. That's where the safety is. I wouldn't want just one. Sometimes I have almost my whole one hundred fifty out on the floor.

Venden: I have heard the question raised, and someone here may have it in their minds as well: Isn't it true that theological positions held by translators many times will be reflected in the translations? Now for example, in the Roman Catholic Bible, somebody asked about the Ten Commandments. Aren't they different? Aren't there a different number? Don't they read differently?

Maxwell: Yes, I've noticed that many assume that surely at least the Decalogue would be changed by our Roman Catholic friends. On the contrary. In fact, Catholic translations are very precise. Some of the best are of Roman Catholic origin. It is true, when they first translated the Bible into English in the Rheims, there was a concern that it be understood. Well, if Mass was still in Latin, why have the Bible in clear English? And so the Rheims-Douay reads like this: where we are used to "powers in heavens above, and power on the earth, and power beneath the earth," "powers celestial, powers terrestrial, powers infernal." Which would stir some preachers, I'm sure.

Venden: Poetic.

Maxwell: Yes, but hardly * clarity there.

Venden: Yes.

Maxwell: So now, as the years have gone by, Catholic translations have become clearer and

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clearer. They are some of the very best. Jerusalem is very readable. The New American, not New English. New English is Protestant. The New American - very readable.

Venden: Well, that is not the New American Standard.

Maxwell: No, that's yet another one.

Venden: Oh, all right.

Maxwell: And the Kleist and Lilly? Now maybe this would show how candid and dependable these versions are. In Romans 6 where there is reference to being buried in baptism, there is a footnote by these two Jesuit scholars at the bottom. "Paul is obviously alluding here to the early Christian custom of baptism by immersion. The descent into the water is suggestive of descent into the grave. The ascent from the water is suggestive of resurrection to newness of life." Want to write a better note than that? That is by these two monsignors, Kleist and Lilly. So the Ten Commandments read exactly the same. Now they count them differently, as you know. The Sabbath commandment is number three. And they're not the only ones. Lutherans generally split the tenth one into two, nine and ten.

Venden: But if one is reading down through the text, one has no problem with the whole message.

Maxwell: They weren't numbered in the beginning anyway.

Venden: Graham, you referred in your presentation to paraphrases and to the Living Bible. And there has been considerable controversy over that, whether paraphrase really is a real Bible sort of thing. What would you say about paraphrases? You've used them in our Bible Reference Sheet, I notice. Are they trustworthy?

Maxwell: Well, in the first place, there is no way to translate without paraphrasing. So there is some paraphrasing in every single translation. Unless you want to go for a word for word literal. You notice in those three places where I had the Hebrew, Aramaic and Greek?

Venden: Yes.

Maxwell: You notice how lame that is with the words out of order? Now, you can buy books. They are called interlinears or diaglots, they call. Sometimes our Jehovah's Witness friends will come to the door with an Interlinear or a Diaglot, and you take it word for word. Have you ever tried to translate French into English word for word? It doesn't make sense. So all translations are somewhat paraphrased. A rephrasing. It depends on how far you go. And Dr. Taylor, he goes . . . *

Venden: *

Maxwell: Yes, he went a long way. In fact, sometimes he will expand a sentence into a whole paragraph. There's no way you could reproduce the written languages from the Living Bible. Now, you almost could with Goodspeed. That's what is so amazing. His is readable American idiom without multiplying words. And yet as Taylor paraphrases, which means that when he's right, he's clearly and brilliantly right, and when he's wrong, in my opinion, he's very clearly wrong. The thing is, he's clear. But * ? Well, let me get a right one, and I'll skip the wrong one. You take Psalm 121:1. "I will lift up mine eyes unto the hills from whence cometh my help." That's beautiful. In the valley he looks across to the mountains, and the snow is there. Very inspiring. I look at it every morning. But in the Bible, what the Psalmist was referring was the fertility cults up there. And Hosea talks about the leaders of Israel going up into those mountains to sacrifice with the cult prostitutes. And * was forever lifting his eyes to the hills. And remember what was going on and going up to those groves and engaging in immorality.

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And so the hundred and twenty-first Psalm says rather in the Hebrew, "Shall I lift up mine eyes unto the hills? Never. My help comes from the Lord." So Dr. Taylor paraphrases: "Shall I look to the mountain gods for help? Never. I will look to the God who created the mountains." I say he is brilliantly right, though it's a rather free paraphrase. I wouldn't be afraid to use Living, but in the interests of precision, I would want to have some of these others alongside.

Venden: I go into the Bible Store or religious book store and I ask for a Bible, I notice Bibles that are advertised as helping me with a lot of explanatory notes. What about that kind of thing?
*

Maxwell: Some are * and some are not.

Venden: * inspired *

Maxwell: Even in the Song of Solomon, where it says "Christ's love for the church," that's an old tradition, but it's not inspired. I think it helps to know the history of these marginal notes through the years. And that's why I'm rather * about leaving the text pure and unadulterated, so I can make up my own mind. I mentioned Tyndale putting in notes. There's an extraordinary one in about 1539 in one printing of the Matthew's Bible, the comment on Peter, that wives should obey their husbands in all things. Well, in the margin of this Bible, which has lots of helpful notes, it says, "Yet it is the duty of the husband to beat the fear of the Lord into his wife, that she may * and obey. Now, where can I get that version? Can you see how a marginal note has no business getting into it? There are many Bibles with helpful margins, so long as you realize they did not come with the same inspiration, and you read them carefully.

Venden: If I heard you rightly, we do not have any of the original words that the prophet Isaiah wrote. We have copies of an earlier. And these manuscripts you spoke about the various variations. In other words, one manuscript had different word graphs or different reading. What I'm wondering is, are any Christian beliefs, is the picture of God affected by these variations? How can you know that, that is, you had another manuscript which gave a ritual *, not just a translation that you might have a different or distorted picture of God? What about all these variations?

Maxwell: It's very interesting to look through all of them and see how relatively few there are and then look at some of the most colorful ones. I think you mentioned first as a Christian belief and then you said picture of God, which I like, because the number one Christian belief is the picture of God. So let me pick an illustration that does reflect on the picture of God. In the twenty-pound Bible, in John 5:3,4, it tells the story that from time to time God would look out over the parapets of Heaven and see that a large crowd of sick people have gathered around the pool of Bethesda. Or is it Bethsaida? Or is it Beth*? They don't what the name is for sure. Anyway, it had five porches. And every once in awhile the water would move. Now what caused it to move? Now the way the story is told in here, it would appear that God would look out over the parapets of Heaven, see the crowd there, and call over His angels and say, "It's worth going down again. Go down and stir up the water. And remember, first one in is healed." And this went on for years and years and years. Finally an angel said to God, "God, we've been watching a man there struggling for thirty-three years to get in, and we angels are so sorry for him, could we bend the rule this once? Could we heal him? Because there's no way he's going to get in." And God says, "You know I never change. First man in is healed." I never did like that story. And I was so relieved to start learning Greek in 1938 and discover that the idea that an angel stirred the water is a legend that crept in later on. The older manuscripts say, "The water moved," and it was probably a dream that an angel did it. Probably was drainage from the temple area or spring or eddies of air movement. But that legend eventually crept into the

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text. Look in the early manuscripts and you have a magnificent story there. These superstitious people thought an angel stirred the water and the first one in would be healed. The real truth was that on a Saturday afternoon God walked by. And the man looked up and saw the kindest face he had ever seen. And the kind face said, "Would you like to be well?" And he said, "I surely would." And that kind face did not berate the man for squandering his health in youthful self-indulgence. He simply said, "Pick up your little mat and go home, and you will be well." That's the real picture of God.

Venden: So that story appears in a manuscript, however.

Maxwell: That's right, later on.

Venden: But here a study of the manuscripts is important.

Maxwell: Very much so.

Venden: So that perhaps on more recent versions which have taken that study quite seriously and based upon that study would be *

Maxwell: * based on the early manuscripts. But there isn't a long list of these.

Venden: Oh, yes. *

Maxwell: There are very few.?? And we could get along without every one of these things, like losing the angels during war.* Fine. It's better without. There's a Trinity text in I John 5:7,8 that has no support in the manuscripts. I never did think it was the best way to support the Trinity anyway. You can do it from the gospel of John and elsewhere much better. So there is not hazard of loss here by going back and comparing all these hundreds and thousands of manuscripts.

Venden: By taking the total picture of it, we're not in any danger of getting a distortion.

Maxwell: That's it. It's looking up here a little and there a little that we always get into trouble.

Venden: You mentioned the Apocryphal books of the Old Testament, some in the New Testament. I'm under the impression that in the New Testament, our New Testament here, there are some quotations from the Old Testament Apocrypha. How about that?

Maxwell: Well, there are some interesting similarities. Whether they are quotations or not would be something else. In Jude it mentions that remember Michael the Archangel going down to resurrect Moses, and Satan argued about it. That story is told in some detail in the Assumption of Moses, which is an Apocryphal, Pseudepigraphical book. Of course, if the story was true, then a common source would be told in several places. Clearly one would be the other reference in Jude where it says, "Enoch, the seventh from Adam, predicted the Lord would come with ten thousand of His saints." That is in the Pseudepigraphical Apocryphal book of Enoch. Of course, if * said best done in full before the Flood, the "Lord is coming with ten thousand of His saints. That was told over many a back fence. And those memory words found their place into the Apocryphal books and also into the book of Jude.

Venden: So then you are saying that if something is in the Apocrypha, that does not necessarily mean that it is automatically wrong.

Maxwell: By all means. There is a long list of things in the Apocrypha which were quite evidently true. John was cast into a caldron of boiling oil and survived. Peter was crucified upside down. Isaiah was sawed in half in a hollow log. That's of the martyrdom of Isaiah. Newspapers have some truth in them too, from time to time.

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Venden: Oh, OK. But I was interested in what you said about a reading of the entire work and how you distinctly see between the Sixty-six and all of these Pseudepigraphical and then the Apocrypha.

Maxwell: Well, the story of Jesus playing with one of His friends. And the boy either threw a stone, * manuscript says, Another says he bumped Jesus, and Jesus in anger turned to curse his playmate and he died. And the parents of the little boy who was dead came to Joseph and Mary and said, "Please, remove yourselves from this community. We do not want this violent child living among us." I could tell you dozens more like that. That's the New Testament Apocrypha.

Venden: Here's a card that came in last week that just wants to thank you. "Thank you for answering my question on why we are still here after two thousand years. I really appreciated that

Maxwell: If there are two?* have an answer to question, tell you to send it in again and make it more *. That would be fine.

Venden: All right. Here's one that I thought was a good one that we need clarification on. "You say that it takes over one year to go through the Bible study and that you have done it a hundred time. Now, how is this possible? Are you over a hundred years old?"

Maxwell: That's like Jesus said, "Before Abraham was, I AM," and they said *." The thing is, I've done it from one to five times per year.

Venden: Oh, I wouldn't have known.

Maxwell: This year four times. Last year five times. Well, we reassure that *

Venden: Well, our time flits by here. Let's take this one. "You spoke about sanctification nearly fifteen years ago. What is this? If we sincerely accept Jesus as our Savior, how can we ever be lost? Once we are saved, aren't we always saved?"

Maxwell: Yes, that would suggest a rather legal understanding of what went wrong. But if what went wrong is that we began to distrust and we became rebellious and we left, as it were, we not only want to be set right, but we want to be kept right, kept in that relationship of love and trust and admiration and willingness to listen. But I could be set right and I could be kept right for awhile, but I am still free to leave. And that's why I understand what Paul said, that "Having preached to others, I discipline myself very closely, lest having preached to others, I myself should be disqualified." The very essence of the truth about God is that He values nothing higher than our freedom, which means that a million years down the line, I'll still be free to go.

Venden: * eleven year old. Maybe it's a big eleven year old. Why are there so many views of who God is? Could you cover all that in about thirty seconds?

Maxwell: There are so many views you couldn't list them in thirty seconds. I think it comes from too many sources. One is from reading the Bible here a little and there a little and not taking it as a whole. Of course, we might view God a little differently legitimately. But also the influence of the adversary behind the scenes. I think among people who really want to know God, one of the greatest sources of diversity here is that we each have our collection of "littles." I have my text. You have your text. If we take the Bible as a whole, there is more possibility we would come into that "unity that is inherent in our faith and our knowledge of the Son of God." And that's our goal.

Venden: All right. Just a quick one again about next Friday night.

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Maxwell: Well the next question is, "If we have a reliable record of the evidence, can we be confident that we correctly understand the meaning?" This is getting more important each time.

Venden: All right. We'll look for you next Friday night to follow that important message.

Maxwell: Good.

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