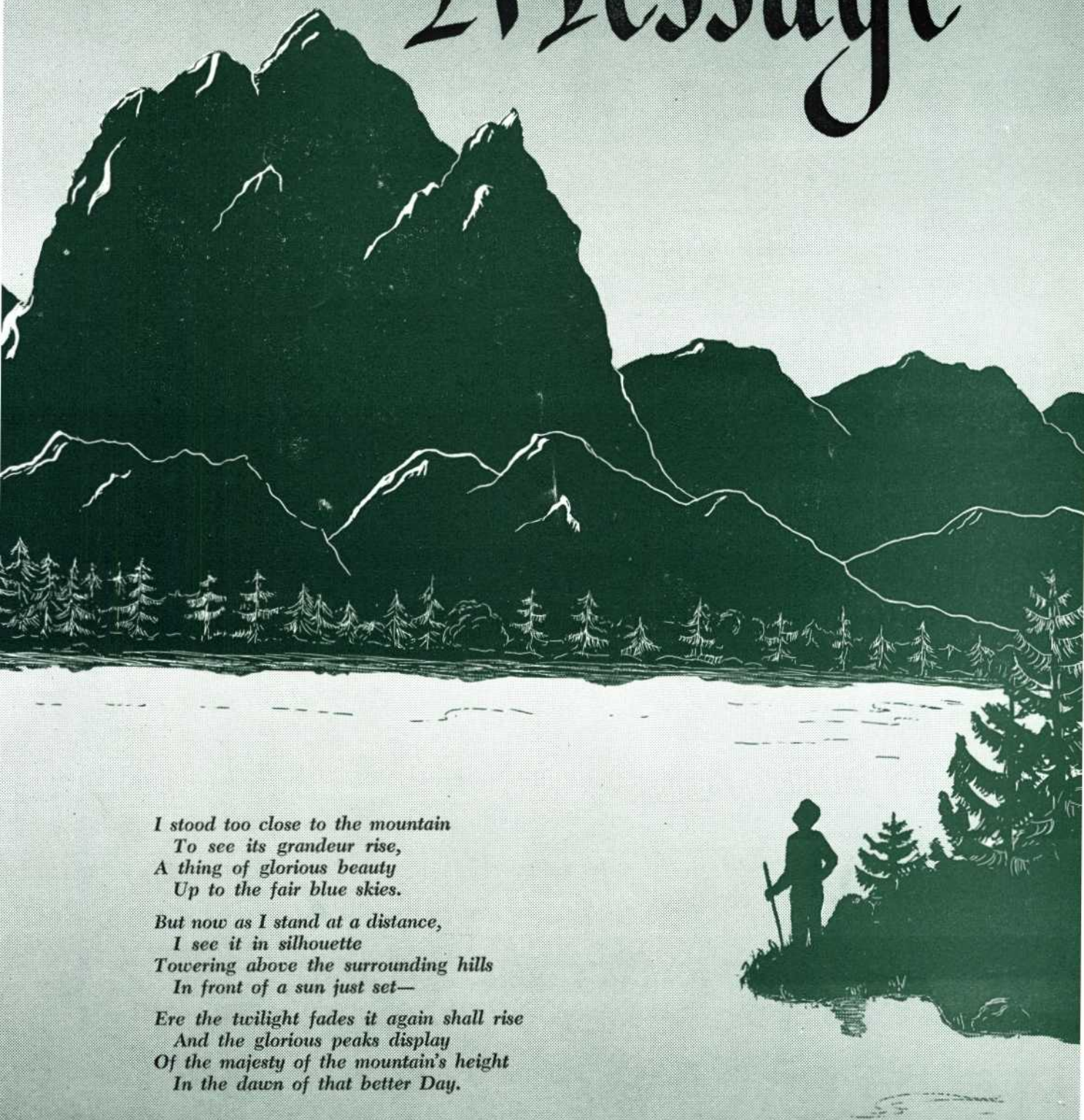


Megiddo Message



*I stood too close to the mountain
To see its grandeur rise,
A thing of glorious beauty
Up to the fair blue skies.*

*But now as I stand at a distance,
I see it in silhouette
Towering above the surrounding hills
In front of a sun just set—*

*Ere the twilight fades it again shall rise
And the glorious peaks display
Of the majesty of the mountain's height
In the dawn of that better Day.*

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KENNETH E. FLOWERDAY, *Editor*

A religious magazine, devoted to the cause of Christ and published for the dissemination of Bible truth alone. The MEGIDDO MESSAGE will

- Strengthen your faith in the Bible
- Answer perplexing religious questions
- Give you courage for these uncertain times
- Help you live above the world's moral corruption
- Reveal to you how to develop a character acceptable to God.
- Bring peace and stability to your life

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INDEX

"Thou Shalt Love the Lord Thy God with All Thy Heart"	3
Timely Topics	7
Great In the Things Which Last	8
How Are we Building?	9
Understanding The Bible	11
New and Novel	15
I'm Thinking	17
Eric Loses A Heavy Load	18
Letters	21
Meditations On the Word	21
Questions and Answers	23
What Went Ye Out To See?	Cover

Editorially Speaking...

Be Honest With God

IT IS NOT easy to be honest with God. By instinct we avoid at all costs the matter of facing up to actualities. But whom do we think we are fooling? Either we think God is very obtuse, or else we salve our consciences with the feeling that He does not know or care.

We may try to sweep our sins under the rug, assume a hypocritical air of innocence, and go our own wilful way. But God sees no rug, no covering, no obstruction. He sees only the unrepented sins that form a barrier between us and Him.

Failure to be honest with God is a continuing source of unhappiness. And more—it means spiritual defeat, until we learn to face our sinfulness squarely and set to eradicating it.

Psalms 139 tells us that God knows our every thought and motive. "For there is not a word in my tongue, but, lo, O Lord, thou knowest it altogether" (v. 4). Think we that we can hide from God? We cannot. There is no place to which we can flee and escape God's all-seeing eye. Even "the darkness hideth not from thee; but the night shineth as the day: the darkness and the light are both alike to thee" (v. 12).

Little wonder that David ends this psalm with the heart-rending plea, "Search me, O God, and know my heart: try me, and know my thoughts: and see if there be any wicked way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting" (vs. 23, 24).

Our unwillingness to be honest with God may result from our forgetting the power and scope of His all-seeing eye. Too easily do we forget that before Him is not "any creature that is not manifest in his sight: but all things are naked and opened unto the eyes of him with whom we have to do" (Heb. 4:13). What folly of us to quake when we realize other *men* know of our sins, when the mighty God of heaven has known of them from the moment we conceived the thought of sin!

David knew well the difference between being honest with God and trying to hide his sins. When he prayed, "Cleanse thou me from secret faults," (Ps. 19:12), he was admitting the tendency to think that things done in secret are unknown to God. In Psalm 32 he tells of the joy and peace that came with honest confession of his sin.

What we are inside God already knows. Why foolishly pretend that we are something else? We often deceive ourselves—occasionally, others. But we can *never* deceive God.

The Bible makes it abundantly clear that God wants the best from His children. There is no honesty in thinking we can hold to God with one hand while we cling to the world with the other. Honesty demands that we obey Him in every plan and part of our lives.

Our God is He who is omnipotent and omniscient, One who is altogether holy, sovereign and supreme. How presumptuous and utterly absurd to think we can hide anything from Him or evade the truth before Him, and not be convicted of our sin. ●●

Thou Shalt Love

the Lord Thy God

With All Thy Heart

Our cover alludes to the man who founded our institution, the Rev. L. T. Nichols. Born at a time (October, 1844) when religious thinking was narrow and less tolerant, circumscribed by the primeval creeds of his time, his gargantuan mind was ever stretching outward and upward for the light of divine truth. The results of this quest made of him a towering giant to his contemporaries, who stood too close to appreciate.

The lengthening distance of intervening years gives better perspective and puts in sharper focus the mountainous accomplishment of this man of God.

The following exposition of clear Scriptural light is typical of the pulpit messages he delivered often thrice weekly to his congregation.

THE THOUGHT of the great and wonderful future, that the promise is indeed in the blessed Word that "they that be wise shall shine as the brightness of the firmament; and they that turn many to righteousness as the stars for ever and ever"; and that we shall continue to enjoy ourselves as long as these wonderful planets shine on in their glory, should be enough to cause us to stop and earnestly consider and ask ourselves the question: Are we ready; are we every moment living for eternity; or are we spending our time for the ephemeral things of this life which will so quickly pass away that we shall wonder where they have gone? We can scarcely realize that all we now have will vanish away to be no more. But the grandeur and glory and beauty, the grand beatitudes of the Kingdom of God will never pass away. They will not only continue to roll on in eternity, but we shall be made like unto the angels, consubstantial with and equal to their eternal glory.

We shall be given a life that will know no sorrow, nor experience one pain. Such a life is worth our



In memory of our founder,
Rev. L. T. Nichols, born October 1, 1844.

consideration. To procure such a home of magnificence and beauty is worth every effort within our power. But still we look around on this benighted world and how few are all interested and inquiring every moment: Am I living as I should? Am I bringing every thought into obedience to our Lord and Master; or am I going along and simply procuring for myself transient pleasures which are to perish like a bubble with the using? We can answer these questions either in our favor or disfavor. It will be according to our actions in life whether it will be for or against. If you and I are keeping all the commandments, it will be for us; but if not, it will be against us. We may go along and deceive ourselves and think we shall live forever, but we shall find ourselves sadly disappointed some day.

A Fundamental Commandment

The first, great commandment is to be kept: to serve the Lord with all our mind, might and strength. We are to have no mind, might or strength with which to serve the world, but must spend all in the service of our Lord; for He has promised to prolong our life through the billions of ages yet to come and give us pleasures that are "exceeding abundantly above" all we can even ask or think. This was not written simply to make a book, but to make an impression upon our affections, to show us the goodness of an All-powerful God. He will do for us "exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think." We can think of a great many things we should like to have, and we could ask for a great many things; but He will do for us above all that. He says, I will express my promise in the highest degree; I will not only do for you above what you ask or think, but I will do exceedingly above what you ask or think; and that is not

enough, I will do for you "*exceeding abundantly above*" all you even ask or think. Oh, it will so far exceed all we can ask or think! What more could He do for us? What greater inducement could an Omniscient God offer us as individuals to get us to keep the first commandment found in Mark 12:30, "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind, and with all thy strength"?

The difficulty is that people in the world do not know what God has said. We are greatly favored above all people in having the privilege of daily hearing these things forced home upon the mind; and our hearts should go out to God in thankfulness for the blessings by which we are surrounded. As I said, the world do not drink in the wonderful meaning of this verse. Too many read it over but do not go down to the depths of it. They only nibble around the outside, instead of digging underneath until they reach the rock. To serve the Lord with all our mind, might, and strength means something. This Rock declares that we must serve Him with *all*—not part, not two-thirds, not three-fourths, not nine-tenths, but *all* our mind, might, and strength.

We have often said this over, but have not drunk in the real import of the words. It does not mean simply to say it over as a parrot says, "Good morning, John," to every one who comes along. When evening comes he still says, "Good morning, John," showing us it is only imitation. He does not comprehend its meaning. And so it is with the wide world, they do not comprehend or drink in the ideas these words contain, that we must love the Lord with all our mind, might, and strength.

A Reasonable Commandment

How reasonable it is that we should keep this commandment, seeing God will do for us exceeding abundantly above all we can even ask or think! How reasonable we should spend all our time in His service, that we should be *wholly* consecrated to Him! And there is also a second consideration: we are not only obtaining for ourselves exceedingly above all we can ask or think, but we are laboring in God's vineyard, and those who listen to us will obtain that same exceeding great reward. We are used as a second instrument that they may be brought into union with God and serve Him with all their mind, might, and strength; that the Lord may do for them "*exceeding abundantly above*" all they could even think or ask.

How great is the sum total of the Christian's life! it is above everything else. The true Christian will make religion foremost. It will not be a secondary matter with him, but he will "*seek first the Kingdom of God and his righteousness*," and then the rest of the things shall be added unto him. Yes, he will be seeking to clothe himself with the righteousness of Christ. Here we are met with the idea

that has blinded the whole world: they know not what the righteousness of Christ is, thinking it means nothing but to simply say, "Lord, be merciful to me a sinner," and we are clothed with the righteousness of Christ. But, beloved brethren, we are to do as He did; there is a work we must perform. Christ did not do it for us, and He never will. We have been wrongly educated.

Neither the Almighty Himself, nor the angels, nor Jesus could cleanse us from sin unless we stop sinning. With God's help, we *stop sinning ourselves*. And how reasonable it is! The God of heaven who said, "Come now and let us reason together," declared through Paul, "Awake to righteousness and sin not." We have the work to do, and we have it to do ourselves; the Almighty cannot do it for us. A man once said to us,

"Why, you limit the power of God!"

"Oh, no, God can forgive us our sins, but He cannot cleanse us; this work we must do."

That is why He told us we must serve the Lord with all our mind, might, and strength. Sin is the transgression of God's law (I John 3:4), and we must cease from it.

So earnest was the great apostle in this matter of keeping this first commandment and urging others, that he pleaded, "I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service" (Rom. 12:1). Is it not our reasonable service to love with all our heart, the God who promises us "*exceeding abundantly above all we can ask or think*"?

The Cleansing Necessary

I would not have thought of such ideas as these myself, but they have been forced upon me. God has seen fit to have them recorded for our instruction and upbuilding, and they are true to the very letter. If we are proud, we may know where we shall stand, for "pride goeth before destruction, and a haughty spirit before a fall." Never shall a proud man or woman see inside the Kingdom of Heaven. If you let pride, or arrogance, or the words of men influence you, you can have no hope of entering that wondrous home. You see there is a work to do, and by working we become cleansed.

A drunkard might make a thousand resolutions that he would stop drinking, but I would like to know if there is anything that could purify that man and make him fit for our company but to stop drinking? Then how much more necessary it is for us to cleanse ourselves in order that we may be fit to be received into the presence of the Almighty and the lovely angels. Do we realize that we are spiritual drunkards? The world have been made drunk on the wine of Babylon; Babylon means confusion. They are made drunk by all this confusion in the world. The spiritual advisers let their members go out in the world and act and dress just as

the world do; and if they want to prevaricate they can. Many are kept in the church just the same—if they have plenty of money. That is why our Master said—and I do not wonder at it—“Strait . . . and narrow is the way, which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it” (Matt. 7:14).

The only thing that will cause you or me to be accepted before God is to do the work, to reform; for Peter says in I Pet. 4:3, “The time past of our life may suffice us to have wrought the will of the Gentiles, when we walked in lasciviousness, lusts, excess of wine, revellings, banquetings, and abominable idolatries.” We are no longer to “live the rest of our time in the flesh to the lust of men, but to the will of God.” If you are going to live to the will of God, you must put away the fruits of the flesh—wrath, anger, malice, hatred, and the rest, and put on the fruits of the Spirit. Produce some fruit that you are going to serve God, and then we will receive you. We cannot receive people by their words only, the fruits must confirm them.

You remember the multitude came to John to be baptized; but he told them, No; you must bring forth “fruits meet for repentance” (Matt. 3:8). That is what he demanded at their hands, fruits “answerable to amendment of life,” as it reads in the margin. First bring forth fruits “answerable to amendment of life,” and then we shall have some evidence that you are in earnest, some evidence that you are being washed from your sins. I said that God could not cleanse us from sin; but He does cleanse every member of the body of Christ from sin. How? We have these great and precious promises set before us; we begin to desire to obtain them, and are led by them to put away wrath and anger and all other fruits of the flesh; then, after we have done all this, God will forgive us. We are cleansed by His Word effectually working in us that believe (I Thess. 2:13). Thus we see how the Divine Record helps us to work out our salvation so that we shall be found worthy of acceptance in the Day of the coming of the Master.

A Serious Consideration

It is a serious thing to serve the Lord with all our mind, might, and strength. The world has not dreamed of its seriousness; that not a person who gets angry will pass the pearly gates. He must cease from anger. We must stop getting angry and impatient; hence John says: “If we say that we have fellowship with him, and walk in darkness, we lie, and do not the truth. But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood [word] of Jesus Christ cleanseth us from all sin” (I John 1:6, 7). That is the basis of all Christian fellowship; and God will not fellowship anyone who transgresses His holy law.

Is it not a serious thing for the human mind to contemplate, a dreadful scene to come before the

mental vision that the church members are all allowed to dress as do the world, without ever being reminded of the apostle Paul’s words to come out and be separate? (II Cor. 6:17, 18).

“Look to yourselves, that we lose not those things which we have wrought, but that we receive a full reward.” “If there come any unto you,” said John, “and bring not this doctrine,”—what doctrine? Why, the doctrine of Christ; and the first commandment of this doctrine is to “love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind, and with all thy strength.” Now, “if there come any unto you”—it matters not who he may be—“and bring not this doctrine, receive him not into your house [*ecclesia*], neither bid him God speed: for he that biddeth him God speed is partaker of his evil deeds” (II John 8, 10, 11).

What is anger? It is a fruit of the flesh; and so if you are bearing that fruit, you may know what kind of tree you are. If we go out here and pick an apple from a tree, we know what kind of tree it is; and so if you are bearing anger, we know what kind of tree you are. Is it not easy to ascertain what kind of a tree it is that is bearing the fruits of God—“love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance”? It is too plain to make any mistake. God has not made it ambiguous or hard to understand, but He has made it so plain that even a fool need not err therein. What is the matter then? Ah! the trouble is, the blind have been leading the blind, and they will both fall into the vortex of destruction by and by (Matt. 15:14).

Jesus said He was the *true light*, and He says that every one that bears anger is a tree of the flesh; so we may know just what we are by looking at the fruit. If we bear one of the fruits of the flesh, whether it be anger, wrath, jangling, theft, or any other evil fruit, we may know what we are. We might as well look for oranges to grow on a floor lamp as to think of finding anger on the tree of righteousness. We are to be “trees of righteousness,” of God’s own planting. The fruits of the Spirit are these: “love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance,” kindness, charity. We must bear these alone. Would you expect, if you went out to gather fruit from an apple tree, to find apples, plums, peaches, pomegranates, cherries, and pineapples on it? No, you would find just apples, and nothing else; and so to be a tree of righteousness you must bear just one kind of fruit, the fruit of the spirit. Oh, it is a narrow way, a difficult road; but it is well worth our while to travel it!

It is just a question whether we believe or not; just a question whether we will keep the first commandment, and the second, which is like unto it—to “love thy neighbor as thyself.” If you love one another as you love yourself, will you be getting

angry, will you be having any wicked feelings, will you be saying any harsh things? No!

The Blessing Promised

When God gave the last revelation to Jesus, and it was sent by the hand of an angel to John that His servants might know His will, He told us: "Blessed are they that *do his commandments*, that they may have right to the tree of life." Do you think He would ever have sent such a message had He not meant what He said? Did He mean that you would get the blessing whether you did the work or not? Never. Do you think we can do the commandments without keeping the first one, to love the Lord with all our mind, might, and strength? Can we expect the bright, shining angels will welcome us into that sweet home in glory unless we have spent all in the service of the Lord? As surely as you live, the gates will be closed against every man who has not done this work; he will find out this to his own disappointment by and by. If all our time, energy, and talent is not spent to procure this wondrous boon, we can never expect to get it.

Oh, to really get our minds down where we can realize that God cannot lie! Oh, to really believe it! It is written, "It is impossible for God to lie." Here is an impossibility; and there are many impossibilities with God. This is one of them, that it is impossible for Him to lie, and He declares unto us: "Now the works of the flesh are manifest, which are these: Adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness, idolatry, witchcraft, hatred, variance, emulations, wrath, strife, seditions, heresies, murders, drunkenness, revellings and such like; of the which I tell you before, as I have also told you in times past, that they which do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God."

Anger, wrath, and malice are named in the same category of evil as murders, drunkenness, and such like; and God says "they that do such things *shall not inherit the kingdom of God.*" Did He say it? He did. All you have to do is to turn to Gal. 5:19—21 and you will find it. Did He mean it? He did. We must bring all we have and are and serve Him with *all* our mind, every bit of it; all our strength, every particle of it; and all our might, every minutia of it. We cannot use one particle to serve the flesh. We might just as well give everything up, as to think we can enter if we make only a halfway work of it.

All we are interested in is for you to gain that exceeding great reward, for you to pass the pearly gate; for us to join our hearts and hands together and show to this benighted world these blessed truths, that they, too, may come in with us and gain that prize which is exceeding abundantly above all we can even ask or think. Let us renew our energy and work harder than ever before to gain the wonderful prize, for we know—no question about it—we know the prize is absolutely certain

to all who remember His commandments to do them; and, on the other hand, if we do not keep them we know we shall reap destruction, for destruction is certain to the workers of iniquity.

May God be with us, and may these few words make a lasting impression on our minds, so that we may be found every moment serving our Maker; bearing the right fruits, that it may be our happy lot to gain a glorious future home and enjoy one another's company through the ages that shall roll on through the gladsome cycles of eternity. Amen. ●

THE MASTER WORKMAN

"And the king commanded, and they brought great stones, costly stones, and hewed stones, to lay the foundation of the house" —I Kings 5:17.

Each child of God is a living stone,
Hewn from the quarry of man,
Rough and unsightly it must be refined
And fitted according to plan.

Once I was rough and not very square
So the Master His chisel did take;
He chopped off a corner with one mighty stroke,
Such a change in my stone He did make!

And then with His rule He measured the size
Of the place I must fill in His wall;
He found me too long—just one inch, said He:
"My mallet and chisel must fall."

It was pride in my heart that made me so long,
That the rule of the Master had found;
So down came the mallet and chisel on me,
And my pride, it was cast to the ground.

At last His quick eye, as the square He applied,
Found a corner that wasn't quite true.
"Tis self-will," said He, "it makes you look rough—"
So a very fine chisel He drew.

And thus into shape I, His stone, He did make,
As He turned me and squared me once more.
"Yet another strong blow you must have"—I sighed,
Oh when would the process be o'er?

And then from His bag a sharp chisel He drew,
And quickly He straightened the place;
'Twas lust, so He said, that had made me look marred;
So firmly He polished my face.

And so I became a bright, finished stone,
All chiseled and polished and square,
Just fit for the Master to place in His wall,
Reflecting His image so fair.

Then reviewing His work as the top stone He laid,
With minaret perfect and true,
His eye caught my stone and He gave me a smile—
"My choicest," said He, "it is you!"

Timely Topics

ONE CANDID look at another creation of the modern mind shocks us from our imagined composure to the reality of the imminent end of this era. It is the new philosophy of much of today's youth, a philosophy basically unsound and ill-conceived.

For all the purported saintliness of "turned-on" youth, their subculture continues to be haunted by violence. The problem is not that hippies and their hangers-on are more evil by instinct than their less belligerent predecessors. It is that they and the adult publicists who celebrate them (usually for monetary profit) are dangerously naive in their attitude toward violence, and more fundamentally, in their view of man.

No New Morality

At least this is the view of many rational analysts. The typical hippie community offers an ethic approving any act so long as it "feels good and doesn't hurt anybody." This profundity, they say, is a liberating advance on the Ten Commandments. Specific guidelines and moral codes are outdated and repressive in this liberated age; moral judgments, it is argued, are best left to the individual instincts of each adolescent. So long as we "love one another right now," all the age-old problems of morality will be solved.

These sentiments are wonderful in theory, but at the same time ignorantly arrogant. The solution is so simple, so obvious, so elegant—what could all the great thinkers have been agonizing about all these 4000 years? Why did the Bible writers through so many centuries, deem it necessary to write down such specific commands as "Thou shalt not" if the guidance of instinct is sufficient? The answer, of course, is that the age-old principle to "do unto others as you would have them do unto you" is, according to the new philosophers, only the barest beginning of morality.

But the problem remains: left to his own devices, the human beast simply will *not* behave in any such fashion.

Man is by nature a dual creature, a tree of "good and evil," capable of both great good and great evil. Promoting the one and restraining the other is the essence of all morality, indeed, of civilization itself. When the instinct for violence breaks through, for example, counter-force is necessary, controlled by some legitimate and civilizing force such as a representative democracy. Otherwise, very soon we would have anarchy.

As for the necessity of moral codes, Burke put it eloquently when he said, "We are afraid to put men to live and trade each on his own private stock of reason; because we suspect that the stock in each man is small, and that the individuals would do better to avail themselves of the general bank and capital of nations and of ages."

"Liberated" youth has been rediscovering these ancient truths at its own expense and pain. Under an image of carefree non-materialism too often lies a sordid reality of drugs, exploitation and casual violence.

The typical individual's need for law and limitation, for restraint and repression, for moral guidance and direction, has not changed since the Psalmist penned these words: "I will instruct decree? Listen to the words of a man who saw first—I will guide thee with mine eye." You need it. I need it. We all need it. Just a little candid observation reveals our incapacity to make consistent and well-supported moral judgments. We all need guidance. History tells the story of more than one advanced society which attempted to outgrow their need for moral restraint—and in which did man become a more dignified, more noble creature?

The modern rejection of all morality serves only to augment the value and unsurpassable beauty of that highest morality which is God-decreed. Time-honored and traditional values cannot be replaced with appealing but fuzzy talk about love. The simple truth is that man is not a beatific creature corrupted by society. He is a creature who must struggle to do good and avoid evil, and he struggles more successfully within the bounds of law than under moral anarchy.

What are some of the moral bounds of divine decree? Listen to the words of a man who saw firsthand the sodomy of ancient Rome:

"If you have really heard His voice and learned from Him the truths concerning Himself, then throw off your old evil nature—the old you that was a partner in your evil ways—rotten through and through, full of lust and sham. Now your attitudes and thoughts must all be constantly changing for the better. Yes, you must be a new and different person, holy and good. Clothe yourself with this new nature. . . . Let there be no sex sin, impurity or greed among you. Let no one be able to accuse you of any such things. Dirty stories, foul talk and coarse jokes—these are not for you. Instead, remind each other of God's goodness and be thankful. You can be sure of this: the kingdom of Christ and of God will never belong to anyone who is impure or greedy, for a greedy person is really an idol worshiper—he loves and worships the good things of this life more than God" (Eph. 4:21—24; 5:3—5, *Living Letters*).

Listen again as this same stalwart Apostle deals with moral sin in the church at Corinth: "What a terrible thing it is that you are boasting about

your purity, and yet you let this sort of thing go on. Don't you realize that if even one person is allowed to go on sinning, soon all will be affected? Remove this evil cancer"—immorality, or even slack morality, is as deadly as cancer. Instead, "feast upon Him and grow strong in the Christian life, leaving entirely behind the cancerous old life with all its hatreds and wickedness."

Here is the standard for the godly, moral, upright life. "Let us feast instead upon the pure bread of honor and sincerity and truth" (I Cor. 5, *Living Letters*)—not new morality, but old-time sound virtues that can never be condemned. ••

Great in the Things Which Last

IN WRITING of the lives of great men, it is customary to evaluate their accomplishments in terms of what benefit they have bestowed upon others in their immediate circle, or on humanity at large. It would be utterly impossible in a brief sketch to enumerate the great men of the past and the present who have added immeasurably to the comforts and well-being of countless millions.

Without mentioning individual names, we can think of many inventors whose accomplishments have raised our standard of living to the highest plane the world has ever known and made it a better place in which to live.

We should indeed be thankful for the temporal blessings made possible by the lives of great men. But with all the advantages—and we cannot deny that they are great advantages—there is one thing seriously lacking: *these things do not last*.

We of the Megiddo Mission honor a man who is little known and even less honored by the world, yet was great in the things which last, great in the sight of God. When the automobile has become as obsolete as an ox cart, when the jet has become a clumsy and slow means of transportation, and the radio and television a cumbersome and useless means of communication, the accomplishments of our founder, the Reverend L. T. Nichols, will just begin to be apparent to the world. He was great in the things which last. His honor will last forever. He can enjoy the fruit of his labors not for twenty-five years, not for fifty years, not for a hundred years, but *to all eternity*.

Men have lived who made themselves great among men by amassing immense fortunes, but the

power to enjoy their wealth was lacking, for death soon terminated their careers. By contrast, our founder was content to spend and be spent for his God, employing all his time and energies to lay up for himself treasures in heaven, "where thieves do not break through nor steal." Because he became rich in good works, untold wealth shall be his in the "world to come."

Promoters of business enterprises have made a name for themselves by helping others to a position of financial stability; but what is that compared with endowing men and women with eternal values, the "unsearchable riches of Christ," helping them to lay up in store for themselves a foundation of good works against the time to come, that they may lay hold upon eternal life?

Military men have earned for themselves the title of "great" by outstanding successes on the battlefield, only to discover during the fleeting moment of victory that the "paths of glory lead but to the grave"; while the man whose memory we cherish, by accomplishing the greater victory over himself shall one day experience victory over death and the grave, be made equal to the angels, an inheritor of eternal bliss.

Brilliant educators have won the praise of serious-minded people by helping ambitious youth to pass the portals into the inner sanctum of knowledge; while he who was great in the things that last helped happy life-seekers to obtain that wisdom which holds in one hand "riches and honor," and in the other, "length of days" in which to enjoy them.

Ambitious men have striven to broaden the horizon of human knowledge by delving into the secrets of the atom, probing into the structure of the interior of the earth, scanning the heavens with the most powerful telescope modern science can devise; but at best, scientific knowledge is fleeting, ever becoming outmoded by newer discoveries, and it holds no key to an endless existence. Our founder was great in the things of real value, the things that last. He sought for knowledge of the saving truths of the Bible as for silver and gold and as for hidden treasures, and was rewarded by finding the "pearl of great price," and then passed it on to his fellow men.

It seems to be characteristic of human nature to be attracted to the individual who has a pleasing personality, who is friendly, always smiling and patting us on the back, telling us we have no serious faults, and whatever we do or say is just about right.

If we should be sailing down a river unfamiliar to us, and were approaching some dangerous falls, rapids or whirlpools, would we want this type of an individual for a pilot? If we were desirous of improving our skill in a certain undertaking and should employ a teacher to instruct us, would we want the teacher who repeatedly told us we were

all right? The success (or, more accurately, lack of success) of the spiritual leaders of the world today is based upon the above formula. "Do the best you can," say "Lord have mercy" before you die, and "you are on the way to glory," is a very pleasing doctrine. But if sincerely desirous of obtaining eternal life and the joys of the future, we do not want that kind of leader. And the man whose memory we honor today never spoke to please men.

Many centuries ago two kings—Jehoshaphat of Judah and Ahab of Israel—were planning to go to battle together against Syria, and the king of Israel inquired of four hundred prophets: "Shall I go to Ramoth-Gilead to battle, or shall I forbear?" And to a man they answered: "Go up; for God will deliver it into the king's hand." They gave the king the answer he wanted to hear. But king Jehoshaphat was more cautious. He said, "Is there not a prophet of the Lord besides, that we might inquire of him?" King Ahab answered, "There is yet one man, by whom we may inquire of the Lord: but I hate him; for he never prophesies good unto me, but always evil." The outcome of the battle proved who was in the right.

Human nature has not changed since the day of King Ahab. And very often we would rather listen to the advice of the four hundred smooth, pleasing, you-are-all-right fellows, than the one lone prophet of the Lord who is crying aloud and sparing not, declaring unto Jacob his transgression and unto Israel his sin. Which prophet do we want: the one great in pleasing our natural desires in temporal things, or the one great in the things which last? The founder of our Mission was great in the things which last. He would not speak more or less than what the Lord has said. It made no difference how much an individual might dislike the advice, if it was for his eternal good Brother Nichols never hesitated to give it. He fearlessly wielded the sword of the Spirit. It was his brave, fearless, courageous facing of all foes who were opposed to God's law, which assured for him a high place on God's honor roll.

It is so easy to give lip service to our leader. But upon deeper thinking we know the only honor our founder would appreciate would be the honor of a perfect life, a perfect following of the commandments which he uncovered from the rubbish of ages; for only by a godly life can we honor the man who was *great in the things which last*. ••

Indispensable? The graveyards are full of people the world could not do without.

To avoid seeing fools, you must remain within your own chamber and break all mirrors.

OCTOBER, 1970

How Are We Building

BUILDING! That is the business on our minds today, the serious business of building for the ages never to end—building for eternity!

How are we building, you and I? We all are active, but is activity enough? All motion, we know, is not progress. Are we just swinging the hammers, so to speak, making *sounds* of building, are we busily moving back and forth, giving the *appearance* of builders, or are we in reality *building*?

What shall we build that shall outlast the ravages of time and decay? The strongest and longest works of earth's great artisans—material or immaterial—fade and fail. Said the Psalmist, "As the whirlwind passeth, so is the wicked no more, but the righteous are an everlasting foundation." Seek as we may, we shall find that the builders for eternity whose work is to be everlasting have builded righteousness. Every other fabric, substance or quality suffers an end.

We are building every day
In a good or evil way.
And the structure, as it grows,
Will our inmost self disclose;
Till in every arch and line,
All our faults and feelings shine.
It may grow a castle grand, or
A wreck upon the sand.
Some may ask, What building this,
That can show both pain and bliss,
That can be both dark and fair?
Lo, its name is *character*.

Only that which is supremely good shall remain forever. The everlasting Word of God speaks to us of everlasting mercy, everlasting kindness, peace that shall be forever, and everlasting joy. How shall we build that ours may be a temple whose pillars shall resound with *everlasting* joy? through whose portals shall stream everlasting peace?

Shall we in this, life's little day, longer tolerate unjoyousness to prevent our progress? Shall we permit dark moments of doubt to palsy our hands, or the defeatism of discouragement to deplete our energy? Subversive winds will blow, the humid days of despair will come, but shall we yield to their enfeebling powers and *waste* the time? We need constantly to nourish strong inner reserves that make endurance possible, which means that we must develop not a cistern of faith in our hearts, for a cistern's resources are superficial. Rather,

let us form a well the resources of which are unlimited! Unlimited faith!

With the drive of plenty of faith, there simply can be no problem of mugginess, of diffidence, of uncertainty, of feelings of insecurity and their debilitating drags. Faith doesn't produce power, but it does release it. Power-releasing faith can always lift the gloom that gathers.

Building, Christian building is our project; and if it truly be our purpose to build for eternity, then we are builders together with God! What a privilege! What assurance could put us harder to work than that?

Let us ever keep uppermost that exhilarating truth. It will strengthen our hope, heighten our zeal and mobilize all our powers to banish every weak and synthetic fiber of our character and impel us to get on with our building with thoroughness and haste!

Building for eternity is not the work of a day. It inexorably demands every moment of the time that is allotted to us—time of an unknown and unknowable quantity. "Redeem the time" is the counsel of urgency of that thorough builder, St. Paul. By so saying, he means for us to seize upon and to turn it to goodness. The stream of time is ever rushing on beyond us. No sighs or tears will ever bring one moment back.

We are constantly building something in our contacts, one with another. What are we accomplishing as we go along? Can it be that we by profuse profession are attempting to build with bubbles? Attractive as they are to behold, they burst at a breath.

Only the mortar of unshakable faith cementing together the stones of righteous works will provide a shelter that shall survive the mighty besom of God when He moves to sweep away the accumulated refuse of man's probation on earth.

Are we building with these enduring stones—granite sincerity of purpose, dead earnest effort, strong determination for right at any cost?

Stones of sacrifice—they have a wide diversity of shapes; but our building will never be complete without them. Sacrifices of worldly pleasure in its many varieties are a common specie. But to tighten the cornerstone and wedge in and secure the edges, there are some very pointed stones to build in, such as the sacrifice of being appreciated; the sacrifice of being recognized; the sacrifice of complete separation from the world about us in speech, in attire, and in attitude; the sacrifice of every desire that upon closest scrutiny fails to match exactly the demands of God's purity and perfection.

There can be no daubing with untempered mortar, no whitewashing—it will be flooded away with the descending rain. Any building in of self-evaluated virtues will crumble away in the great cleansing inundation that shall overflow the earth.

How are we building?

How many of the things that get our first attention will stand the test of eternity?

How many of the things that get top priority of our time and attention, the things that were "most necessary" in our evaluation, will do for an eternal building?—could be they wouldn't endure overnight in a crisis!

How much of our precious energy or valuable time are we investing in building material of waste-paper value—actually, junk, to be scattered like pretty blossoms, or as dust in the coming whirlwind?

Let us ever remember in our building that happy is the man who never barter future good for present pleasure. Building for eternity is rugged work, but a work of matchless benefit.

Happy is the man who sees things not in the light of the moment but in the light of an everlasting future.

The things that are seen are temporal. The things eternal are not seen now.

What does it matter if passersby, our fellowmen, or our erstwhile friends look on with biting scorn as we laboriously bend to the work while they gaily waft on the breeze, bearing them on to sure and inescapable destruction?

How are we building? When the dawn comes up like thunder, shall we be found sitting on the rubble of our procrastination? Just an accumulation of stuff piled up while we were making up our minds to get on with the actual work of building?

Let's build well, whate'er we do.

Let's build straight and strong and true—
you and I.

Let's build clear and high and broad.

Let's build for the eye of God—

YOU AND I.

Walk With God

Is it possible for any of us in these modern days to so live that we may walk with God? Can we walk with God in the shop, in the office, in the household, and on the street? When men exasperate us, and work wearies us, and duties annoy and our best-laid plans fall to pieces, and our castles in the air are dissipated like bubbles that break at a breath, then can we walk with God?

That religion which fails us in the everyday trials and experiences of life has somewhere in it a flaw. It should be more than a plank to sustain us in the rushing tide and land us exhausted and dripping on the other side. It ought, if it comes from above, to be to our souls as the wings of a bird, lifting us up and bearing us above and beyond the impediments which seek to hold us down. If our faith is a Divine force within us, it will do this. ●●

UNDERSTANDING THE BIBLE

"Study to shew thyself approved unto God."

The Kingdom of God

AS A MAN, Jesus achieved a spiritual stature far outreaching the loftiest of His contemporaries. As a teacher, He was likewise unsurpassed. "Jesus the Saviour of Men" might as appropriately be called "Jesus the Teacher of Men," for wherever the Son of God went, He taught.

What did He teach? His whole curriculum centered around one all-inclusive subject: The Kingdom of God. He talked it. He prayed for it. He preached it. He lived for it. Matthew records that "Jesus went about all Galilee, teaching in their synagogues, and preaching the gospel of the kingdom" (Matt. 4:23). Says Mark, "Jesus came into Galilee, preaching the gospel of the kingdom of God, and saying, The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand: repent ye, and believe the gospel" (Mark 1:14, 15). Luke records Jesus' own testimony to the irrepressible inner compulsion which kept Him teaching: "I must preach the kingdom of God to other cities also: for therefore am I sent" (Luke 4:43). Luke also reports that during the forty days Jesus was with His disciples after His resurrection, He was "speaking of the things pertaining to the kingdom of God."

In this lesson we shall study the Kingdom of God as Jesus revealed it in His parables. We shall follow our outline of study:

- IV. Bible Illustrations Reveal the Kingdom
 - E. Parables of Jesus that Illustrate the Kingdom
- V. The Kingdom—for Whom?

As we proceed with this lesson we would do well to remind ourselves often that the words we are studying are the words of the King Himself. We should appreciate them, and value them as such. And if we would picture ourselves as realistically a part of that Kingdom as did Jesus its King, we will find it much easier to generate in our own lives the power which kept Him moving toward that realm.

- IV. Bible Illustrations Reveal the Kingdom
 - E. Parables of Jesus that Illustrate the Kingdom

Jesus did much of His teaching through parables. In fact, "with many such parables spake he the word unto them, as they were able to hear it. But without a parable spake he not unto them:

and when they were alone, he expounded all things to his disciples" (Mark 4:33, 34). No doubt to many an uninstructed ear, these parables had little to offer in meaning. But they were such that every hearer could gain knowledge of profound spiritual truth in proportion to his own faith and perception. Many of Jesus' parables give us insight into God's plans for the kingdom that is to be established upon earth. We will study them according to the various aspects of the kingdom they serve to illustrate.

1. Sovereignty. By what authority is this kingdom ordained and established? Just as every government action today must be permitted under law, so this greater government shall be duly authorized. A kingdom that shall extend from "sea to sea, and from the river unto the ends of the earth" must have supreme authority vested in competent hands.

Who shall be supreme ruler? In parable Jesus pictured Himself in that vital role. In the parable of the **Pounds** (Luke 19:12—27), He compares Himself to a nobleman going into a far country to receive a kingdom, and to return—a procedure familiar to His listeners, since any prospective ruler at that time had to present his credentials to the emperor in Rome, receive an appointment, and return to take over the government he had received. (Throughout the parables we may observe that Jesus used true-to-life occurrences to impress His hearers.)

In this parable of the Pounds, Jesus makes two other important points concerning His sovereignty:

a. His sovereignty shall be challenged. Jesus pictures those who hate His goodness, who despise His unrelenting justice, and rejecting His righteous authority proclaim brazenly, "We will not have this man to reign over us."

b. His sovereignty shall triumph. Rebellious men cannot defeat the plan of God. Jesus pictures Himself as the victorious ruler, with His enemies, representative of those not submissive to His rule, and hence not fit to live in His kingdom, slain before Him (Luke 19:27).

Jesus also pictured Himself as sovereign in the parable of the **Wicked Husbandmen** (Matt. 21:33—42). Here He is represented by the Son. The owner of the vineyard (God) first sends His servants (the prophets), and they are rejected. He then sends His own Son (Jesus), who is likewise rejected.

In this parable, Jesus foretells His own death at

the hands of wicked men: "And they caught him, and cast him out of the vineyard, and slew him" (v. 39). But as in the parable of the Pounds, wicked men cannot overthrow the plan of God. He whose right it is to reign shall take the throne as sovereign ruler and destroy those wicked men (v. 41).

2. The Kingdom—When? Through parables Jesus many times emphasized the suddenness of His coming. "If the goodman of the house had known in what watch the thief would come, he would have watched, and would not have suffered his house to be broken up" (Matt. 24:43).

Again, "For the Son of man is as a man taking a far journey, who left his house, and gave authority to his servants, and to every man his work, and commanded the porter to watch" (Mark 13:34).

Christ's coming, the beginning of a series of events that will result in the establishing of the Kingdom, will be sudden and at a time when men do not look for it. How important, then, the lesson: "Therefore be ye also ready: for in such an hour as ye think not the Son of man cometh" (Matt. 24:44).

In the parable of the **Pounds**, Jesus tried to clarify for His disciples a misconception with regard to the time of the establishing of His kingdom. In Luke 19:11, note that Jesus spoke this parable because "they thought that the kingdom of God should immediately appear." He then continued, picturing Himself as a man traveling into a "far country," indicating a great distance, and a corresponding long time.

In Matthew 25, in the parallel parable of the **Talents**, Jesus says: "After a long time the Lord of those servants cometh, and reckoneth with them." His return would be a long time after He went away. He was informing His disciples that He was not yet ready to establish His kingdom.

3. The value of the hope of the Kingdom. In two short parables Jesus pictures the inestimable value of the Kingdom. First He compared the Kingdom of Heaven to a "treasure hid in a field," again to a choice pearl of great value, the "pearl of great price" (Matt. 13:45, 46). Of such intrinsic value is the Kingdom that in each parable a man given the opportunity to obtain it is willing to sell all that he has to buy it. Eternal life is a prize of incomparable worth! abundant recompense for our selling out all to the Lord and serving Him with interest undivided.

4. Growth of the Kingdom. At its inception, the Kingdom will be small, like the little stone that strikes the image on the feet (Dan. 2:34); but its growth will be so rapid as to be phenomenal. Jesus described this growth in the parable of the **Mustard Seed** (Matt. 13:31, 32). A very small seed when planted, the mustard of Palestine grows rapidly into a large plant. (According to the Bible Dictionary, mustard, as used in this parable, was a plant common in Palestine which grows rapidly to

a height of about 10—15 feet; the birds feed on its seeds.) "As a seed, mustard is smaller than any other; but when it has grown, it is bigger than any garden-plant" (Matt. 13:32, NEB).

The growth of the Kingdom is also compared to **leaven** (Matt. 13:33). Jesus said: "The kingdom of heaven is like yeast, which a woman took and mixed with half a hundredweight of flour till it was all leavened" (NEB). We are all familiar with the power of a comparatively small amount of yeast in dough, thus we can easily understand the parable. From the smallest beginning, the kingdom will grow and expand until it fills the whole earth as the waters cover the sea.

Mark records yet another parable of Jesus that describes the growth of the Kingdom. The Kingdom of God is likened to seed cast into the ground that grew while the man slept. The seed grew and matured and produced fruit, and "he knoweth not how" (Mark 4:26—29). This process is going on in our day. While the world sleeps, not knowing of the workings of God, the plan moves steadily forward. The seed or Word is being sown in a few good hearts. Fruit is being produced for the Kingdom that will be harvested at Christ's coming.

5. Inhabitants for the Kingdom. In many parables Jesus discussed the supreme qualities which every prospective inhabitant must possess. He also discussed the means by which they are planted, prepared, and selected.

a. Planting. God's plan is logical and reasonable. He does not send His kingdom down from heaven ready-made. Nor does He find the people for His kingdom automatically prepared. In His wisdom He allots time sufficient to accomplish each step of the plan.

One primary step is discussed by Jesus in the parable of the **Sower**. No seed can grow until it is sown; and even then, its growth depends on the soil in which it takes root. The seed, or the Word of God (Luke 8:11), falls on four distinct types of ground: the roadside, among thorns, on stony ground, and in good soil. As Jesus explains the parable, the good seed of the Kingdom falls into various types of human hearts. Some lack the element of depth—the stony ground. Some hearts have multiple interests, hence the word of God sown in such hearts is said to be choked by thorns, by the cares, pleasures and riches of this life. Other hearts are unstable, hence the fowls of doubts, or indecision, or adverse human persuasion easily pluck up the seed, giving it no chance to take root and grow. The good ground "are they, which in an honest and good heart, having heard the word, keep it, and bring forth fruit with patience" (v. 15). It is evident that God expects much seed to be wasted; nevertheless, some will produce a harvest for the Kingdom.

b. Selecting Inhabitants. In the parable of the **Labourers** (Matt. 20:1—16), Jesus describes God's

call to men to come into His vineyard and work. The first call was "early in the morning," representing God's first call to men on this planet, as recorded in Genesis. The calls at the third, sixth and ninth hours represent His entreaties to men at various times during the six-thousand-year day of man's rule upon earth. The call for workers in the eleventh hour represents God's call to those living in our own age, the eleventh hour being very near the end of the Day of salvation. To all who would work in His vineyard He promised, "Whatsoever is right, that shall ye receive." In the end, all received a "penny," representative of the reward of eternal life.

c. Separation. In several parables Jesus pictured the separating of faithful from unfaithful servants for His kingdom. The parable of the **Wheat and the Tares** teaches us that both righteous and wicked shall grow together in the field of the Lord until the time of the harvest when the Judgment of God will separate them. Read the parable (Matt. 13:24—30, 38—40). Jesus explains it so plainly that there can be no misunderstanding of the lesson: both faithful and unfaithful are to inhabit the earth until the time of separation.

The separation of the righteous from the wicked is clearly taught in the parable of the **Drag-net**. The Kingdom of Heaven is likened "unto a net, that was cast into the sea, and gathered of every kind: which, when it was full, they drew to shore, and sat down, and gathered the good into vessels, but cast the bad away." In similar manner shall the righteous be separated from the wicked.

Jesus pictures this same separation in Matt. 25:31, 32, as the dividing of sheep from goats. The sheep (faithful servants) He will place on His right hand, and the goats (unfaithful servants) on the left. Those on the right hand are invited to "Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you" (vs. 33, 34).

d. The Necessity of Preparedness. Knowing that the lesson of being ready to meet the King at the time of His arrival could not be overemphasized, Jesus gave many parables on this vital subject. In the parable of the **Ten Virgins** (Matt. 25:1—13), five are represented as wise and five as foolish. Christ is the bridegroom. The five wise virgins who took oil in their lamps represent the faithful who are prepared to last through the long time of waiting with an ample supply of faith. The five foolish virgins, not prepared to keep their lamps burning until the arrival of the Bridegroom, go to buy oil and upon returning find themselves forever shut out of the Kingdom.

In the parable of the **Marriage of the King's Son** (Matt. 22:1—14), Jesus taught a similar lesson. Here the wedding guests "both bad and good" (v. 10) are representative of the two classes of God's servants, faithful and unfaithful, who will be present when the king (Christ) arrives. The

man without a wedding garment (the robe of righteousness—see Isa. 61:10; Rev. 19:8) represents the unfaithful who are to be cast out (v. 13)—rejected because they were not prepared. Note that the man without the wedding garment was "speechless"—he had no excuse to offer for not being ready, only His own negligence, which He was not ready to admit. His end is destruction, or, as in the parable, to be "cast into outer darkness."

V. THE KINGDOM—FOR WHOM?

From the Scriptures it is evident that the Kingdom is not for all humankind irrespective of character and moral accomplishment. There is but one way to life, but one way to enter the Kingdom, and according to Jesus it is the "strait and narrow way that leadeth unto life." All who would seek to "climb up some other way," He warns, are thieves and robbers (Matt. 7:13, 14; John 10:1).

The Israelites were given a choice between a blessing and a curse: a blessing if they would obey the commandments of God, and a curse if they would not obey (Deut. 11:26, 27). The land promised them was a type of the future Kingdom, and many of them were cut off in the wilderness because of their disobedience; hence they failed to see the good land. Down through the ages God's demand for obedience in return for blessings has not changed. The disobedient and lawbreaking shall never find place within the Kingdom of God.

The Psalmist in Ps. 15:1, 2, asks a question and answers it: "Lord, who shall abide in thy tabernacle? who shall dwell in thy holy hill? He that walketh uprightly and worketh righteousness, and speaketh the truth in his heart." And again in Ps. 24:3—5, he is specific: "Who shall ascend into the hill of the Lord? or who shall stand in his holy place? He that hath clean hands, and a pure heart; who hath not lifted up his soul unto vanity, nor sworn deceitfully. He shall receive the blessing from the Lord. . . ."

Jesus plainly taught that there is but one way to the Kingdom: "Strait is the gate, and narrow is the way, which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it" (Matt. 7:14). And in answer to the question: "Lord, are there few that be saved?" Jesus said: "Strive to enter in at the strait gate: for many, I say unto you, will seek to enter in, and shall not be able" (Luke 13:24).

Who is the Kingdom for? The Scriptures abound with texts that give the answer. We will review only a few:

1. **It is for those who seek for it.** The command is: "Seek ye first the kingdom of God . . ."; "Seek those things which are above . . ."; "Seek, and ye shall find . . ."; "Seek the Lord, and ye shall live"; "Seek good and not evil, that ye may live" (Matt. 6:33; Col. 3:1; Matt. 7:7; Amos 5:6, 14). Those who seek for it will be rewarded: "To them who by patient continuance in well doing seek

for glory and honour and immortality, eternal life" (Rom. 2:7).

2. It is for the humble and meek. "By humility and the fear of the Lord are riches, and honour, and life. . . . The fear of the Lord is the instruction of wisdom; and before honour is humility." "But the meek shall inherit the earth, and shall delight themselves in the abundance of peace." "He will beautify the meek with salvation." "Blessed are the meek: for they shall inherit the earth" (Prov. 22:4; 15:33; Ps. 37:11; 149:4; Matt. 5:5).

3. It is for those who bring forth fruit unto holiness. Jesus said: "By their fruits ye shall know them" (Matt. 7:20). In the parable of the **Wicked Husbandmen**, He said to those wicked men: "The kingdom of God will be taken away from you, and given to a nation that yields the proper fruit" (Matt. 21:43, NEB). We learn what the proper fruit is from the apostle Paul: "But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance: against such there is no law" (Gal. 5:22, 23).

4. It is for the diligent. Diligence reaches into every avenue of the Christian life; it is the compelling motive behind every action. Those who truly seek the Kingdom will be diligent to obtain it.

Peter makes an appeal for diligence: "Giving all diligence, add to your faith virtue; and to virtue knowledge; and to knowledge temperance; and to temperance patience; and to patience godliness; and to godliness brotherly kindness; and to brotherly kindness charity. For if these things be in you and abound, . . . ye shall neither be barren nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. . . . Give diligence to make your calling and election sure: . . . for so an entrance shall be ministered unto you abundantly into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ" (II Pet. 1:5—8, 10, 11).

5. It is for the "new man." The apostle Paul said: "Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new" (II Cor. 5:17). We learn how to become a "new creature" from another of Paul's Epistles: "But now ye also put off all these; anger, wrath, malice, blasphemy, filthy communication out of your mouth. Lie not one to another, seeing that ye have put off the old man with his deeds; and have put on the new man, which is renewed in knowledge after the image of him that created him" (Col. 3:8—10). In Eph. 4:22—24 he writes again: "That ye put off . . . the old man, . . . and that ye put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness." The old man is nothing more than our own, naturally evil ways, our lower nature; the new man, our better self which we must develop.

6. It is for the non-conformist. In this modern age, few dare to be different from the world around them. Whatever the fad, the majority conform.

All who would enter the Kingdom, however, must be found among the godly whom God has set apart for himself (Ps. 4:3). The commands to be set apart are numerous:

"Come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord"; "Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world." "Be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind"; "Be thou an example of the believers, in word, in conversation, in charity, in spirit, in faith, in purity." "We should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world; . . . a peculiar people, zealous of good works" (II Cor. 6:17; I John 2:15; Rom. 12:2; I Tim. 4:12; Tit. 2:12, 14).

7. It is for those who keep the whole law. The apostle James, author of the Epistle bearing his name (thought by some to be the brother of Jesus), made this point: "For whosoever shall keep the whole law, and yet offend in one point, he is guilty of all" (Jas. 2:10). It is not that because one command is broken, all are broken, but that a broken commandment stands between him and God. Jesus' command is: "Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect"; and, "Be ye holy, for I am holy" (Matt. 5:48; I Pet. 1:16). We can easily understand why God demands strict obedience to His commands for all who would enter His kingdom. If He were to allow one person to enter with a little bad temper, another with a little jealousy, another who lied occasionally, He would soon have all the evils of the present day in His heavenly Kingdom, and the situation there would be no better than we see it on earth today.

We have learned who will and who will not enter the Kingdom. In addition, the Bible abounds in evidence on the subject. Several chapters give excellent advice of what is required of the true Christian. The only way to do His will is first to know it. Read and study Ephesians 4, 5 and 6; Colossians 3, and Titus 2. Paul was the apostle to the Gentiles, and his writings are for us. ●●

To be a messenger you must know the message.

TEST YOURSELF

1. Study the parable of the Pounds (Luke 19). How many aspects of the Kingdom can you find revealed?
2. What parables reveal when the Kingdom will come?
3. What parables reveal the rapid growth of the Kingdom?
4. Discuss briefly who will inhabit God's Kingdom.

Reprints of these studies are available upon request.

New and Novel

**Leader of Megiddo Mission Band
Advances Some Novel Beliefs at First Tent Meeting—
His Conceptions Are Sometimes Stupendous**

THOSE WHO attended the first meeting of the Christian Brethren [name of the Megiddo Church at that time], held last night in their new tent, which has been set up on a lot at Genesee Street and Bronson Avenue, were, perhaps, impressed with the thought that the leader of the band, Rev. L. T. Nichols, is a believer in big things. The tent is large; it can be made to accommodate 1000 persons. It is equipped more completely than tents for city mission work often are. Then, a doctrine is taught that undoubtedly strikes the orthodox believer as little short of stupendous in its conceptions; and the speakers make no mean use of numbers in their talks, nor do they exercise small freedom in the interpretations they put upon Bible passages.

One of the tenets advanced by Mr. Nichols last night and supported by an ingenious coupling of Scripture texts was that innumerable beings were created by God before the creation of Adam and Eve. He referred to his perplexity as a boy when considering the statements that Adam was created about 6000 years ago while from a study of the rocks it appeared that the earth had been in existence thousands, if not millions, of years before that time. This, said Mr. Nichols, made it seem to him that God for ages had been neglecting His opportunities for making and blessing those whom He made.

To support his tenet that God created beings prior to the time of Adam he referred to Psalm 103:17, 18, in which the mercy of God is spoken of as being "from everlasting." This, Mr. Nichols explained, meant from "an eternity in the past to an eternity in the future." Now since mercy could not have flowed out unless there was someone to whom it might flow, the speaker argued, there must have been beings from the very beginning of time. The proposition was further supported by arguments of a like character.

"So you see," said Mr. Nichols, "before Adam's time there were millions and quadrillions and decillions and duodecillions of men created and saved in God's mighty universe."

While these numbers were being assimilated, Mr. Nichols spoke briefly of his knowledge of the Bible.

"The Bible is to me," said he, "as a-b-c-d-e-f-g-h-i-j-k-l-m-n-o-p-q. My life has been spent in the study of the Bible. In saying this I would not have you think I am glorying in my knowledge unwarrantedly. We are told that we are not to glory in wisdom, nor in might, nor in riches, 'but let him that glorieth glory in this, that he understandeth and knoweth Me.' So, you see, we are commanded to glory in our knowledge of God."

Mr. Nichols believes that certain Bible passages give a greater conception of God's goodness, greater reason, therefore, for serving Him and greater joy in the service. One such text was Daniel 12: iii: "And they that be wise shall shine as the brightness of the firmament and they that turn many to righteousness, as the stars forever and ever." Celestial beings, he said, "radiate the light from their glorified forms."

According to the Christian Brethren, the future of those who live acceptably will be such as to quite reward them for any of the inconveniences of earth, and Mr. Nichols' ideas on these subjects he pictures in graphic language. Certain phrases recurred in his address.

"Those whose hair was silvering for the tomb," he said last night, would soon, if their lives had been in harmony with the divine law, enter into the summerland of love and view the wonderland of beauty.

"What would you give," said Mr. Nichols, "to pass through the pearly gates of the heavenly city, walk down its golden-paved streets and pluck forever the fruits of the tree of life?"

"We are passing off the stage of action at the rate of one every second," said the speaker in giving some of his calculations. "This means sixty a minute, 3600 an hour, 86,400 every day and over 31,536,000 every year."

There was much of good counsel in the address given by Mr. Nichols, sandwiched between fragments of his somewhat startling beliefs. Banners on the platform bore passages that give expression to the Christian Brethren's conception of the divine care. Some of these follow;

"My beloved is mine and I am His; He feedeth among the lilies."

"Blessed be the Lord, who daily loadeth me with benefits."

"He brought me to the banqueting house, and His banner over me was love." (Continued next page)

The interior of the new tent presents an attractive appearance. It is well lit with acetylene gas, and comfortable chairs have been provided. There is a platform in front, on which is the organ and seats for the band, as well as the pulpit. Triangular shields, on which are words of welcome and verses of Scripture, have been placed just above the pulpit.

There was an attendance of between 200 and 300 persons at the meeting last night. During the earlier part of the meeting the space before the opening to the tent was crowded with men and women, young men and young women and children. A policeman maintained fairly good order. Mr. Nichols kept the attention of those within the tent during his address. A short talk was given just before the close of the meeting by Mrs. Maud Hembree.

The Christian Brethren's Band went in the new band wagon, that has just been completed, about the city yesterday afternoon. The band is of twenty-two pieces, and the music furnished by it is a feature of the meetings. Thus far there has been no congregational singing. Mr. Nichols reads the hymn, the band then plays it, and afterwards, sings it verse by verse.

The women members of the band wear a uniform, the conspicuous parts of which are a white waist and black bonnet with a narrow edge of white. (Also full-length skirts, but in 1904, these were not noticeable or worthy of mention.) ●●

Words to WALK By

Conscience is a safe guide only when God guides the conscience.

A godly talk does not always imply a godly walk.

It is a great deal easier to do what God wants us to do than to face the responsibility for not doing it.

If you want your neighbor to know what Christ will do for him, let him see what Christ has done for you.

Religion is a process repeated, not a process remembered.

The man who makes sparks fly usually burns himself.

To hatch despair, just brood over your troubles.

Where we will live hereafter depends largely on what we go after here.

Pressing ahead is a good way to keep from falling behind.

Education without God is like a ship without a compass.

The Loom of Service

IN THE Eastern countries, professional weavers often are unable to complete the extensive and elaborate tapestries assigned to them during their lifetime. When one weaver dies, another picks up the threads and weaves on according to the original pattern.

This same principle is carried out among all of God's servants. Each works faithfully until death; then others pick up the threads and weave according to the Master's plan. The work must be carried on to completion.

Our founder worked carefully and long separating the golden threads of true religion from the dark and unsightly threads of error, and then displaying them to the world. After his death, other faithful servants carried on the work.

How beautiful the thought that all the faithful are working together in the fabricating of a vast tapestry of spiritual accomplishments that eventually will adorn the gallery of heaven, when this earth has been perfected and annexed to heaven.

We are hastening toward a meeting with Christ, the great Master Weaver. The hour is late, the task is urgent. Let us pick up the threads which others have left for us in the loom of service and finish the weaving while the day lasts, for the night cometh when no man can work. ●●

Obituary

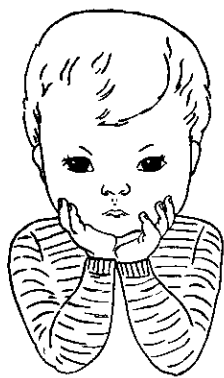
John J. Berg

The icy hands of the Great Avenger are ever busy, plucking whom he will. This time his reaping gathered in an aged friend and brother, John J. Berg, for whom funeral services were conducted July 31.

A lifelong resident of the Rochester vicinity, Brother Berg became a member of the Megiddo Church in 1924 and helped willingly with the church's activities. In recent years of failing health he resided with his sons in nearby Churchville, who brought him to church regularly so long as he was able and provided diligently for his every need.

Brother Berg is survived by one daughter, Mrs. Ethyl Mathys, of Rochester; three sons, John and George, of Churchville, N. Y., with whom he made his home, and William Berg of Phoenix, Arizona. He is also survived by one sister, Mrs. Walter Hannah, of Oakland, California, and five grandchildren. ●●

MEGIDDO MESSAGE



I'm Thinking

SOME OF the best men the world has ever seen have spent part of their lives in prison. Joseph, you remember, spent long and dreary years in the prison of Egypt. Jeremiah, the prophet, was not only put in prison but was let down into a miry pit and nearly died there. John the Baptist was put in prison by cruel men, also the apostle James. The apostle Peter was shut up in prison till the angel of the Lord came and opened the prison gates and let him out.

But none of these great heroes of the Bible was more familiar with the inside of prisons than the apostle Paul. Let's think about one of the strangest scenes of his prison life.

Singing in a Strange Place

Two servants of God were locked up. The heavy doors were shut upon them. The darkness surrounded them. The fetid odors of the dungeon rose and caught their breath. Their bruised backs leaned against the damp wall. Their feet could not be moved. Their wounds rent them with pain. Outside their cell door the blackguards and vagabonds of Philippi, who had been imprisoned for all sorts of crimes, kept up a din, with oaths and coarse laughter and ribald songs.

But the hours wore by, and the night fell over the city and over the prison. The darkness in the cell of Paul and Silas could not be deepened. But in the room outside, the red glow faded from the window and the noise of the prisoners sank to silence as they flung themselves on their pallets to sleep. The jailer and his family were asleep. The prisoners in the large room were all asleep; midnight and silence and sleep enveloped the prison building.

But what sound steals out in the silent midnight? It fills the large room where the prisoners are sleeping. One after another awakes; he hears music such as he never heard before. He sits up and listens. Is it the angels pouring their songs on the midnight, as they did on the plains of Bethlehem? Where can it be coming from? Is it possible that it is coming out of the inner prison? Are those two broken, bleeding men whom they had seen thrust in there, singing?

Yes, Paul and Silas could not sleep. Their smarting wounds would not allow them. But how did they spend the long and heavy hours? In complaining to each other of their misery? In cursing the injustice of those who had imprisoned them? In weeping and groaning over their pains?

No. They talked to each other cheerfully and pleasantly, till they almost forgot their misery and their wounds. They prayed together until they felt as though they were in a garden, rather than in a dungeon. And at last their hearts grew so full and so happy that they could no longer restrain themselves and they broke out together into song which awakened their fellow-prisoners.

What made them able to rejoice and sing for joy in such circumstances? It was not that they were brave men, though they were very brave. It was not that their friendship for each other was so strong that they were able to drive care from each other's minds, though they were the best of friends. These things would not have been sufficient to make them triumph over pain and gloom and wrong as they did.

What was it, then? There was a third person in the cell. If the jailer had opened the door and looked in, he would not have seen him. Even Paul and Silas could not see him, but they knew he was there. Who was it? The angel of the Lord. He was with them; and His presence and protection made the midnight bright and changed the clasp of the stocks into perfect freedom, made them forget their pains and misery; it changed the dungeon into a temple, and the groans of pain into psalms of praise. It was for Christ's sake that they had been beaten and imprisoned, and that was enough.

I wish you to sing. But I wish most of all that you should have the joy which gives birth to song. It is the heart, and not the throat, in which the song has its true habitation. When you sing of the truth of God and praise Him for His love, do you feel what you are singing? Do you feel it so much that you cannot help singing? If you do, then you will sow the seeds of joy wherever you go, and you will see them springing up in the new and happy lives of those who listen to you. ●●

Let's Think About—

The Church of Smyrna
(Rev. 2:8—11)

The Church at Smyrna was poor—but rich. They were troubled by the devil, probably some civil agents, who cast some of them into prison. They suffered much tribulation, but were assured that, if faithful, a crown of life awaited them.

Something to think about. What are the trials of this present life, if only we can gain the crown!

Eric Loses a Heavy Load

I'LL DO IT this time, but this will be the very last. Why does everybody keep asking me to do jobs I don't like?" Eric was grumbling as he dragged his feet along the familiar path that led through the woods, on through the cemetery, and out into his grandfather's backyard. Grandfather was not feeling well, and Grandmother had asked Eric to help his grandfather with the milking to-night.

Away off in the darkness, in the still of the evening Eric could hear Claude and Claudette barking. Great Uncle Gus must be giving them their supper, he thought. How he wished he could take the dogs out for a run, right now—instead of helping with the milking! Soon it would be hunting season—it was only six o'clock, and already the sun had set. He could see the beautiful white church silhouetted against the darkening sky.

Hunch Hill, where Eric lived (it was named for the narrow hill it was built around) was a small rustic town where everybody knew everybody else. Eric was especially well known, because he was substitute paper boy. Eric liked to deliver papers, and the route took him right down this path.

He could see a light as he neared the farmhouse. "Oh, I'll hurry up and get this job over with," he told himself.

As he opened the barn door, Grandmother smiled pleasantly, though she looked very tired. Grandfather was hobbling along, trying to do his work. "Well there, Sonny," his booming voice made Eric's ears ring. "What brings you here so late in the day?"

Eric did not answer. He picked up an empty pail and started for the milkhouse. Did Grandfather have a sprained ankle? Eric surely hoped not! He didn't want to be stuck with this job!

Eric half-did everything that had to be done, and then scampered out the door. "Sure hope Grandpa gets well fast!" he shouted to the trees as he trotted through the woods. "One thing sure, when I grow up I won't be a farmer!"

The next day as Eric was walking home from school he saw the large bundle of newspapers still lying on Randy's doorstep. Tied to the wire that held the bundle together was a note. Randy was in bed with a bad cold, it said, and Eric was to do the collecting tonight, as well as the delivering.

Well, Eric loved to deliver papers, but the collecting—that was a different story! Why did Randy have to be sick tonight? Oh dear, he thought, I sure do get stuck with the bad jobs. Eric unfastened the wire, filled his sack, slung it over his shoulder, and started down the street. The load seemed heavier

than usual. Eric couldn't understand that. The newspapers were no bigger, and the route in Hunch Hill never grew.

Next morning was Saturday, and most beautiful. Eric was just awake when he had a wonderful idea. He would take this whole day just for himself! He would sneak out before his mother could hear him and give him a Saturday job to do. He might even get in a little late season fishing.

It was barely sunrise. Eric rushed around quietly, so as not to awaken his mother, stuffed a sack with crackers and apples. Hurriedly he dug some worms, and by the time the sun was up he was well on his way to Wilders Creek, fishing pole over his shoulder, to see about those fish. He was so pleased to think that he had thought of this. As he was leaving he was almost sure he could hear his mother's voice calling him, but he wasn't about to turn back and answer.

Eric settled down by the creek, baited his hook, and tried to anticipate a big catch. But somehow he couldn't stop thinking. "I wonder if Mother really did need me. After all, I'm all she has now, with Dad gone," he mused to himself. But it did seem as though she needed him too much. He wanted a day for himself—just one. He threw his line out, reached into the bag for an apple and bit into it slowly, thinking—thinking.

He was seated cross-legged on a large boulder, his head drooping as he twisted the apple about in his hand. His heart was heavy. Finally he stood up and tossed the apple core into the stream. He would go home and see if Mother had called. Anyway, the fish weren't biting.

Eric trotted down the narrow lane that led home. As he neared the house, he could hear his mother talking to someone. Why, there was dear old Uncle Gus! his silver hair and mustache gleaming in the morning sunlight! He loved his Uncle Gus. Really, he was his Great Uncle. He always seemed very old and very wise. Eric enjoyed helping him with the hunting dogs that he trained for the city folks. Eric hesitated just outside the back door and strained his ears. He was sure he could hear his name.

"I'm sure Eric would have enjoyed that, but he is nowhere to be found," his mother was saying. "I'm sorry, Uncle Gus."

"Yes, I wanted him to help me out at the camp," Uncle Gus sounded disappointed. Eric wondered if he should show himself or hide until Uncle Gus left.

He hadn't known that his uncle was going to need him. If there was anything he enjoyed, it was going to the camp with Uncle Gus. He squatted

down behind the blackberry bushes that grew in the backyard. All he could think of was the good day he could have had, how he would untie Claude, the bluetick-hound and Claudette, the little beagle. And they would run delighted this way and that until they received command. Then they would stiffen their legs and stop. Uncle Gus was very particular that they obeyed orders promptly.

Uncle Gus' car started, and Eric decided it was time to go inside. He knew Mother wouldn't let him go now, anyway.

As he went into the house he caught a whiff of the most pleasant aroma. Mother was baking his favorite cinnamon cookies. Eric felt all the more guilty now. "Mother, I'm sorry." Eric spoke rather timidly as, head down, he avoided his mother's eyes. He laid the crumpled bag of apples and crackers on the kitchen shelf and started for his room.

"There you are, Dear. Uncle Gus was here looking for you. He would like someone to help him with the dogs. And—"

Eric stopped at the dining room window and listened.

"He even offered to pay you. You know, he is not so young anymore."

Eric did not know what to say. Finally he found a few words. "Mother, may I—may I please—go to see him?" Eric was almost sure she would not let him. But Mother said that he could as soon as he finished his Saturday chores.

Mother had said nothing about his sneaking off. Eric wondered if maybe she didn't know. He worked extra hard to finish his chores as soon as he could.

That evening as he entered the gate at Uncle Gus' place, he was thrilled, looking forward to the new job he was sure to get. "Good evening, Uncle Gus. Here I am. Sorry I wasn't home today when you were there. Mother told me that you were looking for someone to help you with the work here." Eric felt a little honored.

It was getting late in the evening, and the dogs were busy hunting down trails. Eric could hear them yipping with delight in the distance. This was music to his ears.

Uncle Gus was building a campfire and Eric started right away to gather firewood. Uncle Gus kept studying Eric through the welcome flames of the fire. He knew Eric needed a lesson that he wouldn't forget right away. His mother had informed him of what had happened, about his sneaking off early that morning. Finally he spoke to Eric.

"Yes, Eric, I need a boy to help after school hours." Uncle Gus hesitated. "I thought you were that boy. But I have been thinking that perhaps you are not mature enough to do the job. I know that you need the money, too; but I must have a boy willing to work patiently. This job is not always pleasant. So I have hired another boy. I am very sorry, Eric."

Uncle Gus was just that, very sorry. But he had talked it over with Eric's mother and they both decided that this would help Eric learn a very important lesson.

The following Monday after school, Eric saw Randy trying to catch up with him. He had something important to tell Eric. "Eric, I wonder if you would like my paper route? It's yours, if you want it." Randy's dark eyes looked like serious business.

"Why, Randy, of course. But why? What will you do to earn extra money?" Eric asked. Randy turned his face away to avoid looking at Eric, and went on to explain about the route. Eric thought this was very strange, but he was so pleased to find his new responsibility. He decided that this would be a new challenge, and that he would do his very best.

After they parted, Eric turned to wave back at Randy and he could see him heading toward the wooded lane that left to his Uncle's camp. Could it be? Well, that explained why Randy—of course, yes. Of course his uncle had chosen the wiser boy of the two, and Eric had only himself to blame. At first Eric felt very bad. But he was not going to grumble or hold any bitter feelings. From now on he promised himself that he would try his best to do right, no matter how unpleasant the job.

Eric made one of the finest paper delivery boys Hunch Hill ever had. And after he changed his attitude, the load of newspapers didn't seem so extra heavy, even on collection day. Do you wonder why? ●●

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The Great Father above is the Shepherd Chief. I want not. He throws out to me a rope, and the name of the rope is Love. And He draws me. He draws me to where the grass is green and the water is not dangerous. And I eat and lie down satisfied.

Sometimes my heart is very weak. And falls down, but He lifts it up again and draws me into a good road.

His name is Wonderful.

Sometime—it may be very soon—it may be longer—it may be a long, long time. He will draw me into a place between the mountains. It is dark there, but I'll not draw back. I'll be afraid not.

For it is there between the mountains that the Shepherd Chief will be.

And the hunger I have felt in my heart all through life will be satisfied.

Sometimes He makes the love rope into a whip. But afterwards He gives me a staff to lean on. He spreads a table before me with all kinds of food. He puts His hands upon my head, and all the "tired" is gone.

My cup He fills till it runs over.

What I tell you is true. I lie not. These roads that are away ahead will stay with me through this life. And afterwards I will go to live in the Big Tepee and sit down with the Shepherd Chief forever.

—Author Unknown

Incredible Growth

Near us is a new piece of road through a grove. Walking along the side of it the other day, I noticed a tiny plant something like a melon growing right up through that new pavement? Apparently the seed was covered by sand, then the tar and stone, but there was still power enough in that seed to get it through to the light!

Just think of the energy in that tiny seed. It must have a great desire to grow. If we have that much energy to grow into holiness, we will surely succeed!

—Contributed by a Florida reader.

Be Faithful in Small Things

OUR LIFE here is something like a journey through a jungle where each step involves small but important decisions.

Whether we arrive home or are lost depends upon many small things.

We lose our friends, our usefulness, even our religion, not by great decisions, but by small neglects.

We fail in small courtesies and acts of kindness and eventually our friends are gone. We become lazy or careless and our usefulness is gone.

We begin to follow afar off, to take the other side of the road to escape duty, to miss fellowship by neglect of worship, and before long our religion is gone.

Life gets narrowed down, not so much by negative decisions, but by needless neglects.

But let us remember that those called blessed have completed only that which the Creator terms a reasonable service (Rom. 12:1).

This service is within the capacity of ordinary people. We can all be faithful in Jehovah's reasonable requirements. ••

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LETTERS

Learning

I have learned many things from the booklets you mailed to me, and I know more about the coming of Christ. Any Bible evidence you can mail me, I will be very grateful.

Sapele, Nigeria, Africa

D. A.

Convinced

Reading through the Questions and Answers in the *Megiddo Message*, I find that the questions are reasonable. But if the parties would read and study the booklets and the Bible as I have, there would be no need or room in their hearts for so many questions. As for me, I know it's true.

I read the Bible daily. If you are going to get in the spiritual race, you need the spiritual food daily. To know all the truth, not just a part of it, is my advice to anyone that is interested in eternal life. They need to study it at all times.

Lansing, Ill.

H. H.

From a Visitor

It has been a pleasure to know you and people like the Megiddos. I am happy to be away from the life in which money tried to buy happiness. We know that "man cannot live on bread alone," for we must put God into our daily living.

Something in my life is just a little bit different. I wonder whether our visit to the Church helped to make me want to be different. Now, you see, I want to be a good Christian.

Yesterday is marked on my calendar as the first day I really tried to be a good Christian. I want to forget the past, to overcome my ill temper and to put God into my life.

Please pray with me that God will give us the guidance we need to take up our cross daily. We need His help, and everyone does.

We cannot count too highly on being alive tomorrow to change our way of life and to begin Christian living. When people said, "The time is short," I didn't pay any attention because the days went on. "Here today, gone tomorrow," was a nonchalant way to live. Now we must realize that we may not have a chance tomorrow to live the way Jesus showed us how to live. Let us use every opportunity to do things according to His way.

Oneida, New York

Mrs. A. S.

A Shining Bit of Gold

The Reverend L. T. Nichols has cleaned the golden cup, a most difficult task indeed. Now let us help show God's everlasting truth and mercy by being a light in the dark, a bit of gold shining in that night. The job shall be done. The gold shall shine forth in its full brightness.

Moyie, B. C., Canada

R. F.

Richly Blessed

Thank you so very much for the booklets. I have read and re-read them, and have learned more, really understood more about the Bible than I ever knew before.

I hope more people will see your ads and will write for your

messages. They are so easy to understand, and the blessings I receive are far more than I can pay you for.

May God continue to bless you and help others as I have been blessed.

Belden, Miss.

G. B. M.

Christ's Example to Us

I would like to make a few comments on the death of Christ, the cross, His blood, and His resurrection.

I believe what you said in the Question and Answer column in the *MESSAGE*. I have put a great deal of thought into this subject. Because Jesus died on the cross and spilled His blood, is no saving grace for me! I believe that God had two reasons when He sent Jesus to earth. One was to show His people the way to salvation and to set an example for us to follow (which in general is not being done today). The other was this: that God was preparing Jesus for His coming Kingdom, if He lived a perfect life on earth (which He did). Then, too, there was to be a resurrection to confirm our hope. And how could there be a resurrection without a death?

All this was God's knowledge from the beginning. Jesus had to fully surrender Himself in order to become the future King of the world. The reason why people believe so many strange doctrines is that they have never really tried to find the right answers.

Vergennes, Vt.

R. E. W.

Meditations On the Word

"For wisdom is a defense, and money is a defense; but the excellency of knowledge is, that wisdom giveth life to them that have it" (Ecclesiastes 7:12).

From the dawn of human life on our planet, man has felt and experienced the need of defense, of protection from surrounding dangers. With the growth of civilization, the need of defense has not lessened but rather increased, for with new discoveries have come new problems and new perils. Today man's most crying need is protection from himself, from the consequences of his own devilish ingenuity; this, in spite of the fact that never before has there been so much money or so much worldly wisdom in circulation. If this be civilization, then may we be defended from it!

The two things compared, or rather contrasted, in our text, are obviously of absurdly unequal value. Intelligence was giving life, or survival, to the savage, thousands of years before money was dreamed of. And certainly no one would think of mentioning the divine wisdom in the same breath with mere money, even though it might be somewhat embarrassing to many if asked which they were pursuing with the greater fervor. But let no

one belittle the power of money. Ever since man first employed an artificial medium of exchange, money has talked, and loudly. So long as it is honestly manipulated and its representative value maintained, money is a defense against many things. When facing old age or physical disability, a little of the "mammon of unrighteousness" is a very convenient thing. Those who profess to utterly despise money would not care to try to get along without it, and very often a sneering remark about "filthy lucre" means only "sour grapes."

We are speaking, of course, of this life only. And yet even in this life there are voids which money cannot fill—the yearnings of the spirit for freedom from sin's bondage, the cravings of the mind for the secrets of the universe, the need of true companionship, of loyal and unselfish friends. The Preacher from whom our text is taken knew all about it; he spoke from experience. It was he who wrote,

"I made me great works; I builded me houses; I planted me vineyards: . . . I got me servants and maidens . . . also I had great possessions . . . above all that were in Jerusalem before me; I gathered me also silver and gold . . . men singers and women singers . . . musical instruments of all sorts. So I was great . . . and whatsoever mine eyes desired I kept not from them. Then I looked on all the works that my hands had wrought, . . . and, behold, all was vanity and vexation of spirit, and there was no profit under the sun" (Eccl. 2:4—11). He it was also who wrote, no doubt from the bitterness of personal frustration, "Better is a dinner of herbs where love is, than a stalled ox and hatred therewith" (Prov. 15:17). There are some things—many things—which money cannot buy; and the best of them are supplied only by divine wisdom.

But when all these things, and much more in the same vein, are considered, it still remains a matter of individual preference. Many men and women have no desire for the rewards of wisdom; for them money and its power are a sufficient defense. If they can procure it, they are happy; if not, they are doubly frustrated and miserable; still their choice remains the same. This class can be eliminated from the equation. But there are a multitude who stand at the crossroads, torn by conflicting emotions—the old, old struggle between tangibles and intangibles, between the things which are seen and the things which are not seen. The visible Present will always win over the invisible Future unless we have eyes of faith, illuminated by the promises of God in His revealed Word.

"Consider your ways," cries the prophet (Haggai 1:7). There are times when an hour's serious consideration is worth more than a month of blind effort. Consider that life, at best, is brief. "If a man live many years, and rejoice in them all, yet let him consider the days of darkness; for they

shall be many" (Eccl. 11:8). Robert Ingersoll said it well, as he stood at the grave of his brother:

"For whether in mid-sea or among the breakers of the farther shore, a wreck must mark at last the end of each and all. And every life, no matter if its every hour is rich with love and every moment jeweled with a joy, will, at its close, become a tragedy as sad, and deep, and dark as can be woven of the warp and woof of mystery and death."

What then? The question stands. What then?

Yes, to each individual there will come a time when all human effort and accomplishment, all the achievements of art and science and statesmanship, the hopes and fears of all the years, will add up to exactly nothing. Not always at the end of threescore and ten, or fourscore years; but in the bloom of youth or at the height of manhood's activity, Death may let himself in with his master-key and quietly say, "We'll go now."

Our perspective will change swiftly then. Money will no longer be a defense; it has lost its power. Millions cannot purchase a single day, or even an hour. A bronze casket and a lofty monument are a poor substitute for life. Worldly wisdom is weak, for the aches of the philosopher differ no whit from those of the idiot. This is—for most—the end.

It is at this point that Wisdom takes over. Wisdom alone holds a master-key more potent than that of death. God is not the God of the dead, but of the living, for all live unto Him. Natural death is but an interlude for those who have in life chosen wisdom, the better part which shall not be taken away. "All things that pertain unto life and godliness" come through knowledge, the written record of God's will and His dealings (II Peter 1:2, 3). Acquiring and accepting this knowledge unites us with God mentally. Applying that knowledge to the utmost in our daily life makes us in the moral image of God. Here we can rest our case, having reached the limit of our power, trusting the Eternal to complete the Contract and—still through knowledge—change our mortal body into His physical image. This is immortality, eternal life, the reward of wisdom. Whether waking or sleeping, the end result will be the same, for Wisdom's key will cause the dead in Christ to stand again in the day of Resurrection when this mortal shall put on immortality, and this corruptible shall put on incorruption, and we shall be changed (I Cor. 15:53). ●●

O Lord whose mercy never fails,
Weigh me on thine eternal scales,
And I am naught:
Yet load me so with grace
Of deed and thought
That I may look the balance in the face,
To note each day my gain or loss,
And lift my heart or bear my cross.

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

"It has come to my attention through my study of the Bible that Jesus was not hung on the cross about the sixth hour, as I had formerly believed and as you state in your booklet, *The Great Apostasy*. Mark 15:25 states: 'And it was the third hour, and they crucified him.' Matt. 27:35 states: 'And they crucified him, . . .' then says in verse 46, 'And about the ninth hour Jesus cried with a loud voice, saying. . . .' Luke 23:33 states: 'And when they were come to the place, which is called Calvary, there they crucified him. . . .' Verse 44: 'And it was about the sixth hour.' These verses are all in harmony, but only Mark tells us the hour He was hung.

"I realize that such a point has nothing to do with our salvation; however, when error is discovered, it should be corrected. Do you not agree?"

I agree with you that the exact time of the crucifixion is inconsequential. I also see a point in your position that if the Gospels disagree, anyone wishing to pick flaws with the Bible would be encouraged to do so if a suitable solution to the seeming disagreement could not be found.

The newer translations of the four Gospels all confirm Mark's account of the hour, the third hour or nine o'clock in the morning.

You feel we should correct ourselves when we say that the crucifixion took place on the sixth hour and abide by Mark's third hour. Now Matt. 27:45 does not actually say that He was crucified on the sixth hour, but it infers it, or at least it doesn't deny it. Luke 23:44 is identical, and infers that the crucifixion had taken place at about that time—"about the sixth hour." John 19:14 pictures Jesus as being still before Pilate at about the sixth hour.

In view of this rather confused history of the day's events, I do not feel we would be justified in trying to establish the time by Mark's Gospel any more than by either of the other Gospels. We might rather give the different hours as recorded in the different Gospels, and leave the reader to take his choice.

I do not believe that the history of that forenoon's activities would permit the approach that all that was done could have been completed by nine in the morning. Public officials these days would not be apt to begin a day's proceedings before nine in the morning. They may have started earlier in those times. At the instigation of the crafty priests, Jesus was arraigned before Pilate. Finding no fault with Him, and learning that He was a Galilean, Pilate sent Him to Herod. Herod then sent Him back to Pilate again.

Each of these appearances, though not truly fair trials, consumed some time. Pilate's authority to the Jews to crucify Him was followed by His

scourging; the mock coronation by the Roman soldiers, the removal of the gorgeous robes and re-clothing Him with His own garments. All this took place in or near the public Judgment Hall which must have been located in the center of the city. From there they started the trek on foot to Golgotha carrying the cross—Golgotha was outside the city, thus a considerable distance from the Judgment Hall. It seems unlikely that all this could have been accomplished by nine in the morning.

A footnote to Mark 15:25 in the Knox translation of the Bible is very enlightening. It reads as follows: "It is generally thought that St. Mark is here treating the space between nine o'clock and noon as a single stretch of time, which he calls 'the third hour'; we are not, then, to suppose that our Lord was nailed to his cross at nine o'clock, and hung six hours upon it. If he was crucified at eleven, or even half-past eleven, it would still be during 'the third hour'; in the sense that 'the sixth hour' had not yet begun." The reader is then referred to verse 33: "When the sixth hour came, there was darkness over all the earth until the ninth hour. . . ." In a footnote to John 19:14 we find the following: "It was now about the sixth hour," that is to say, "getting on towards noon."

Thus there is no real discrepancy between the reports in the different Gospels. They merely used different approaches in reporting the time on which these situations occurred.

"Paul did not attempt for one single moment to deny the presence of the old nature within him. In Romans 7, he explains this struggle with the old. He faced the fact and did not seek for one moment to hide behind a false face or claims of human holiness. So he cries out in verse 24, 'O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death?' Paul realized that victory lay only with the Lord Jesus and not in his own efforts or strength."

You are right that Paul did not deny the presence of the old nature within him. But I cannot agree that he felt that he himself could do nothing about it. Let Paul speak for himself. He had "not yet apprehended," but he was determined that he would apprehend (Phil. 3:12-14), and by his own effort. "I therefore so run, not as uncertainly; so fight I, not as one that beateth the air: but I keep under my body, and bring it into subjection: lest that by any means, when I have preached to others, I myself should be a castaway" (I Cor. 9:26, 27).

If Christ had accomplished the work for him, why did he need to fear being a "castaway"? No, Paul was struggling, he was putting effort into the work, he was running, giving himself wholly to it. Christ, by offering the hope of eternal life gave him the stimulus to work, the power; but Paul himself applied that power. ●●

What Went Ye Out To See?

Across the sea, along the shore,
In numbers ever more and more,
From lonely hut and busy town,
The valley through, the mountain down,
What was it ye went out to see,
Ye silly folk of Galilee?
The reed that in the wind doth shake?
The weed that washes in the lake?
The reeds that waver, the weeds that float?--
What was it ye went out to hear,
By sea and land, from far and near?
A teacher? Rather seek the feet
Of those who sit in Moses' seat,
Go humbly seek, and bow to them,
Far off in great Jerusalem.
From them that in her courts ye saw,
Her perfect doctors of the law,
What is it came ye here to note?--
"A young man preaching in a boat."
A prophet! Boys and women weak!
Declare, or cease to rave;
Whence is it he hath learned to speak?
Say, who his doctrine gave?
A prophet? Prophet wherefore he
Of all in Israel's tribes?--
He teacheth with authority,
And not as do the Scribes.--Sel.