

Megiddo Message



WANTED: Strong Convictions

DOES it matter what we believe if we are sincere?

There is only one answer: Yes!

People of God in all ages have all had one characteristic: strong convictions. They were always sure of what they believed and in whom they believed.

Moses led the Israelites out of Egypt where they had been suffering in the iron grip of Pharaoh. At Mount Sinai, God gave a special law for their direction and guidance; but the law had to be applied and enforced. Even with direct help from God, the task was not easy. For nearly forty years Moses labored with them. What sustained him in the difficult task? His strong, settled convictions. He knew God was with him, he knew God was guiding, and he knew God would be faithful to His promises.

Why are convictions so important to us? They make us greater than our natural selves. They make us able to strongly impact our own lives with purpose, direction, and power. They enable us to make a definite influence in the world. In the mists of uncertainty and broken hopes the world today has lost its way. People are looking for someone who clearly knows where he is going because he is sure of something. If even 10 percent of the American population, wrote a modern-day would-be reformer, "were clear about their doctrines, beliefs, and values,...taking a consistent position, then we could begin...to have a voice again in the midst of our community."

Strong convictions fix a certain standard of belief. When we require of ourselves a certain standard, we shall have a settled standard of conduct to which we will be loyal at all times, whatever the circumstances. When we are sure that stealing is wrong, and that we must not steal if we would be in God's favor, then we will not take anything from the office even when we know we shall not be discovered. We shall solidly refuse to allow ourselves to be tainted by the ideas and motivations of the world but will instead stand for truth, love, honor, and goodness.

When people do not have convictions that include a settled code of conduct, they sometimes have considerable difficulty deciding what they ought to do in a particular situation. An advocate of what is popularly known as "situation ethics" wrote the following: "Whatever is the most loving thing in the situation is the right thing." More than one

person has followed this view only to discover that the "most loving thing" can be the *wrong* thing in the sight of God.

A settled standard of belief will promote our rapid spiritual progress because we will be able to say with the apostle Paul, "I know whom I have believed, and am persuaded...." Our devotedness will become stronger because we shall know that if we do on our part, He will do on His. If we fulfill our part of the contract, we can be sure He will be faithful to us and fulfill to us all the promises He has made. Knowing the Bible is His Word to us, we shall be sure that what He tells us is true.

Having settled convictions will prevent our being "tossed one way and another and carried along by every wind of doctrine, at the mercy of all the tricks men play and their cleverness in practicing deceit" (Eph. 4:14, JB).

How can we become solid in our convictions? We can read the Word of God and pay attention to what we read. When we listen, we can think on what we are hearing, with the intention of building up ourselves in our most holy faith, for "Faith cometh by hearing...the word of God" (Rom. 10:17). We can seize every available opportunity to be impressed by the thoughts of God—whether we hear them from the lips of a stranger or from our close friend. How can we afford to let any opportunity pass unused? Each day we can set aside moments to carefully read and meditate on the Scriptures of truth. We can—indeed, we must—if we would ever attain the "measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ."

The best way to preserve our convictions is to practice them. All beliefs, even the strongest of impressions, tend to fade. When we make a point of *acting* on our beliefs, we shall find that they become a permanent part of our lives. Truth is always fixed when it is embodied in real life.

Is it right to be dogmatic, to be sure of what we believe? Yes, if we are sure that what we believe is according to what God has revealed in His Word. If we have answered the challenge to "Prove all things, hold fast that which is good," we can be dogmatic and say with conviction, "I know."

Settled convictions lead to a mature spiritual life, and mature spiritual life leads directly to a place of honor in the Kingdom of God. Who does not want that place? MM

Megiddo means

"a place of troops" (Gesenius' Hebrew Lexicon); "a place of God" (Young's Analytical Concordance). Megiddo was and is a town in Palestine, strategically located, and the scene of frequent warfare. In the spiritual parallel, it is a place where soldiers engaged in spiritual warfare gather to renew their strength and courage (II Cor. 10:4-5).

We believe

—in God the Creator of all things, all men, and all life.

We believe

—in the Bible as containing the genuine revelation of God and His purposes for men, and as being our only source of divine knowledge today.

We believe

—in Christ the Son of God and our Perfect Example, who was born of a Virgin, ministered among men, was crucified, resurrected, and taken to heaven, and who shall shortly return to be king of the whole earth.

We believe

—in life as the gift of God, and in our sacred responsibility to use it for God and His coming Kingdom.

We believe

—in all mankind as providing the nucleus from which a superior, God-honoring people shall be chosen to receive the blessings of immortal life.

We believe

—in ourselves as capable of fulfilling the demands and disciplines given us in the law of God, thus perfecting that high quality of character which God has promised to reward with life everlasting in His heavenly Kingdom on earth.

We believe

—in the promise of God, that a new age is coming—is near—when the earth will be filled with His glory, His people, and His will be done here as it is now done in heaven.

Bible quotations in this issue:

Unidentified quotations are from the King James Version.

Other versions are identified as follows:

NEB—New English Bible

NIV—New International Version

NAS—New American Standard

RSV—Revised Standard Version

TLB—The Living Bible

TEV—Today's English Version

JB—The Jerusalem Bible, Reader's Edition

Phillips—The New Testament in Modern English

Berkeley—The Modern Language New Testament

Weymouth—The New Testament in Modern Speech

Moffatt—The Bible, A New Translation

Williams—The New Testament, A Translation in the Language of the People

Rotherham—The Emphasized Old Testament

About Our Cover:

Evening view of the Megiddo Church, 481 Thurston Road, Rochester, New York. Photograph contributed by Newton H. Payne.

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Vol. 70, No. 1

January 1983

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The **MEGIDDO MESSAGE** is a religious magazine devoted to the cause of Christ, and published for the dissemination of Bible truth alone. Official organ of the Megiddo Church. L. T. Nichols, **Founder**; Kenneth E. Flowerday, **President and Editor**.

The **MEGIDDO MESSAGE** is available in microfilm from Xerox University Microfilms, 300 N. Zeeb Road, Ann Arbor, MI 48106.

The **MEGIDDO MESSAGE** (USPS 338-120) is published monthly (except July) by the Megiddo Church, 481 Thurston Road, Rochester, New York 14619. Second Class postage paid at Rochester, New York. **SUBSCRIPTION RATE:** One year, eleven issues, \$2.00. **POSTMASTER:** Send change of address to Megiddo Church, 481 Thurston Road, Rochester, New York 14619-1697.

If Ye Be Constant . . .

Scripture Reading: *I Chron. 28:5-10*

Among the words of the Lord spoken to David when David was transferring the government of his kingdom to his son Solomon was this shining promise: "Solomon thy son, he shall build my house and my courts: for I have chosen him to be my son, and I will be his father. Moreover, I will establish his kingdom for ever, if he be constant to do my commandments and my judgments, as at this day" (*I Chron. 28:6-7*).

Richer assurance was never given. "I have chosen him to be my son, and I will be his father. Moreover, I will establish his kingdom for ever." But this was not all of the Lord's message. There was also a condition, an *if*: "If he be constant." When David heard these words from the Lord, he no doubt was hopeful that his son's career might be one of constant and ever increasing devotion and godliness, perhaps following the pattern of Samuel the prophet, that he might serve God ever more loyally all the days of his life. But alas! we who can read the end of the matter know that Solomon, with all his privilege, advantage and opportunity, was *not* constant. The career that began so nobly within only a few months began its downward plunge and was to end, forty years hence, in the shame and utter ruin of total apostasy. Solomon was not constant.

But the promise—and the condition—was recorded to be a challenge to us: "If he be constant"—if *we* be constant, you and I.

Constancy—Required

Constancy is a quality required in all of God's people in all ages; constancy in faith, in obedience, in love, in dedication; constancy in accepting the disciplines and denials of life with a right spirit; constance in showing

an example of Christlikeness to all with whom we are associated.

But constancy, like many other qualities required of those who would be godlike, is not found in nature. In fact, it is totally *contrary* to nature. Only change is constant. Ocean tides rise, and fall. The sun rises, and sets. Seasons warm, and cool. Plants grow, and decay. Nations rise, and fall. Civilizations come, and go. Any work of men's hands almost immediately begins to suffer the ravages of time, and soon is gone. Constancy is not found in nature.

Inconstancy Our Problem

Inconstancy is a natural, normal part of our physical lives. By nature we are bound to a cycle of change. We are born, grow to maturity, and soon begin to decline. God does not condemn this. It is the pattern He has designed for our mortal lives. But the same tendency to cycle and change is a plague to our spiritual efforts. How frustrating, at times, seems the battle against it. One day we are full and overflowing with faith. We are convinced, absolutely convinced, that Christ is coming and that we are at the end of the age, and are determined that we will do nothing whatever that might in any way hinder our most rapid preparation. But let an hour go by, or a day, and the hope seems not so vivid; the imminence has removed, and the urge of immediacy has vanished. The doldrums are over us and there is little, if any, spiritual vibrancy in us.

Or it might be our bright vision of the goal that is not constant. One day it is vivid in our minds beyond mortal description. We can almost hear the heavenly choir and feel the joy that will thrill each new immortal. And when we close our eyes, we can see the glorious company of the saints marching down the High Way to Zion with songs and everlasting joy upon their heads; we can even picture ourselves there among them. Yes, we *have* to be there! Nothing, nothing in the whole world can

Note: *If Ye Be Constant* is available as a complete church service on cassette. Price: \$3.00

stop us. It is all so real, so true, so sure. But...

Only a little while, and for some unknowable reason the spirit has weakened, the vision has dimmed. Everything about us seems so earthly, so ordinary, so inescapably near, and we ourselves feel so inadequate. Yes, we still believe. The vision is still true, but somehow we have lost touch. The deeply moving impression has vanished. Our little problems loom so large—problems of obligation, of responsibility, of ill health, of human relations—that we can scarcely see beyond them. Meanwhile, the vision of the future recedes further and further into the unknown, like a dream, and we stand as it were afar off, looking, longing, wondering what it all means and how it can ever be.

You have felt it; I have felt it, in one form or another. The ups and downs. The surges and the recessions. The rises and the falls. One day so full of faith; the next day cool, calculating, all but indifferent. Why? We are not ready to give up, but neither are we pressing with all our power. We are up; we are down. Where, oh, where is the constancy we seek? What is the way to that clear, consistent life that is one steady onward march to perfection?

Mountains and Valleys

Praise God for the mountaintop experiences of life. We need them. We need the days of refreshing, when words of life pierce us like arrows to the mark. But however stimulating these experiences, they are not the norm of life and they cannot always last; life is not intended to be all mountaintop. There must be constancy through the valleys, a constancy of spirit that will keep us always in touch with our Creator and reverently, prayerfully, steadily moving toward our goal whatever the terrain. The poet has expressed it well in these words:

*Not always on the mount may we
Rapt in the heav'nly vision be;
The shores of thought and feeling know
The Spirit's tidal ebb and flow.*

*"Lord, it is good abiding here,"
We cry, the heav'nly presence near;
The vision vanishes, our eyes
Are lifted into vacant skies.*

*Yet hath one such exalted hour
Upon the soul redeeming power
And in its strength, through after days,
We travel our appointed ways.*

*Till all the lowly vale grows bright,
Transfigured in remembered light,
And in untiring souls we bear
The freshness of the upper air.*

Constancy is not found in nature.... Only change is constant.

*The mount for vision: but below
The paths of daily duty go,
And nobler life therein shall own
The pattern on the mountain shown.*

Here is the ideal. But how? How can we make the valley always bright with the vision of the mountaintop?

We might begin by trying to identify some of the possible causes of our inconstancy. What makes our faith dim, or hope fade?

Causes of the Problem

We are not all alike. Fortunately. Nor are we all tempted by the same weaknesses. But there are several possible causes for our inconstancy which we might recognize as contributing to our problems in greater or lesser degree.

Recognizing the cause of our dispirited feeling is the first step toward conquering it. A solution may or may not be possible. Some situations can be cured; others must be endured. But in either case, our faith has the answer. If our problem cannot be helped, it still does not need to *hinder* our spiritual effort. There is no problem so severe as to be a justifiable "excuse" for below-par conduct. It is very possible, in fact, that we may be able to use our problem to help us forward!

Do we feel ourselves out of touch with the real thrust and spirit of our faith, that we don't have the "Ready for anything" spirit? What is the reason?

Physical Disabilities...

First, as a matter of course, we should check the physical side. While the physical problems of life do not excuse spiritual recession, we can by identifying the cause at least know how to deal with it. The source of our problem may be anything from simple weariness to the manifold concerns created by ill health. Or it may be that some stressful situation or temporal concern is taking the keen edge from our fighting faith. Of course it is natural to feel that our problems are worse than those of any who have preceded us. No one ever felt quite so bad as we do, no one ever had a pain so intense, or a testing so persistent, or a situation so demanding. But let us not deceive ourselves. Others before us have been mortal.

Others before us have suffered. Others before us have been tempted. None of the problems that plague us are new to the human race—or to the Christian race, for that matter.

How often have God's people in other ages used the inabilities and sufferings of this world as spurs to attaining the rewards of faith! In fact, making the most of a bad situation seems to have been the special ability of God's people in all ages. We don't have to read very far in the Divine Record to find those whose problems were greater than ours—much greater—and who handled them masterfully.

Was Paul bound in chains? He could still use his mind to explore the limitless reaches and profound depths of God's wisdom and knowledge. When exhausted with this, he could company in thought with the angels, and in between he conversed by pen with his brethren. Was Jesus facing death? His work was finished, His life was His Father's, and He could say with complete resigna-

tion, "Thy will, not mine be done." In due time He would be lifted beyond the reach of evil and evil men, even to sit down at the right hand of His heavenly Father! No man, whatever his position on earth, could interfere with this plan. What had He to fear?

Was Jeremiah half-starved, mistreated, falsely accused, imprisoned, thrown into a pit and left to die? Intolerably bad treatment, we might think. But he did not give up. Not Jeremiah. Certain was he that God was in control, and whatever God saw fit to allow, Jeremiah was willing; his one concern: to do what God wanted him to do, to be loyal to his divine commission.

Think of Daniel. Could a situation have looked more hopeless? This promising, princely, God-fearing lad suddenly taken into the power of cruel captors, deported to a foreign and pagan land, his future apparently ruined—had he not cause for despair? But no, his life belonged to God, wherever he was, and he was confident that God would work all things for his good. Little did he

Let Us Pray...

O Lord our God, who knowest our needs before we ask and who lovest each humble, obedient heart: we come in glad anticipation to this time of worship. Let our meditation ponder this morning not only Thy continuing goodness to us but also our need to show continuing devotion and goodness toward Thee by a more fully consecrated, disciplined, dedicated life.

Father, we thank Thee for all the many kindnesses that come to us unbidden; for the beautiful world in which we live; for thoughtful words of appreciation; for prayers that stabilize us in storm; for all good memories of inspiration, aspiration and security that help to make us less like our natural selves and more like Thee; for Scripture passages that burst suddenly into our souls with streams of light. All are channels of joy that enrich life and make ever more precious the hope that burns in our souls.

Father, we praise Thee that Thou hast set eternity in our hearts, the desire for real and enduring value, and hast set before us wonders magnificent beyond compare. But alas! we acknowledge with shame our tendency to waywardness, to vacillation, to inconstancy. In spite of all Thy goodness to us, how often we find ourselves one day full of faith and determination; the next day indifferent to

Thy great purposes for us. Father, we pray Thee to save us from ourselves. Save us from this up-and-downness; and may we henceforth be constant in our dedication, making our path one steady upward climb. Whatever our natural feelings, may ours be the determined spirit that says each hour of each day, "This one thing I do."

We pray for Thy forgiveness for the times when we have missed any manifestation of Thy goodness to us; when we have majored in minors and magnified minutiae; when we have gloried in the past and let slip the laden opportunities of the present; when we have chosen instant relief over unwavering persistence; when we have lacked the discipline to hold ourselves firmly within the boundaries of Thy law and have allowed ourselves liberties of which Thou dost not approve. Help us to take ever more seriously our responsibilities to Thee realizing our eternal life depends upon it.

We pray Thy blessing on all, wherever they may be, who are seeking Thee in sincerity and in Truth. Wilt Thou watch also upon those who are not now Thy people but of whom it shall someday be said, "Ye are the people of the living God." Sustain the sick, comfort the bereaved, and strengthen the faltering. And wilt Thou hasten the Day when Thy Son shall return to earth, when all suffering and sorrow shall become part of the forgotten past and all everywhere shall know and serve Thee. And may we all strive the more continually for the standard Thou hast set above us, that we may share together the bliss of Thy New World, for Thine is the Kingdom, and the power and the glory forever. Amen.

What do you do when you don't feel like pressing on?

know that in far off wicked Babylon he would actually meet angels from heaven!

"Feeling" Like It

Again, it may not be anything external that is responsible for our dispiritedness. Is it possibly a flaw in our disposition? Perhaps we are subject to moods, a certain changeableness in our attitude toward things temporal. If we are, our spiritual life is sure to be affected also. How can we deal with this?

The fact is, sometimes we *feel* like pressing on, and sometimes we do not. "Pressing on" was the theme song of the apostle Paul. It is a good theme for us, too, a song for the high days, the days of victory. It is also a song to spur us through the ordinary days, the low days, the days when we don't feel like pressing on.

While feeling or emotion can be an unsafe guide, it has its uses, and is indispensable to the "pressing" Christian. Our religion is based on reason and an intellectual appeal, but it must also be "felt" as well as reasoned. A faith which does not reach down into the heart and touch the emotions and affections, and in turn be supported by them, is likely to be dead and sterile. It is only when emotion is out of control that it becomes harmful, and then it can do plenty of damage.

The Christian is not cold and mechanical but warm-hearted, sympathetic, capable of deep feeling. If not, he is not a Christian. We may be fully convinced that we *should* press on, but until there is that emotional reaction that makes us *feel* like pressing on, there will be little progress made. Feeling, properly controlled and directed, will carry us through situations where unaided reason would fail us.

That may be true, you say, if you do indeed feel like pressing on. But what about the days when you do not feel like pressing on? For we cannot deny that such days come. They should not, of course; with God's Tomorrow before our eyes, there should be no dark days. But if all things were as they should be with us, we would be perfect, and there would be few problems. Our present problem is how to attain perfection. There is nothing to be gained by shutting our eyes to the facts, and the painful fact is that not only in the song books do we encounter roads that are rough and steep, that we are beset by doubts and fears, buffeted by storms of

temptation, or find the burdens heavy and the days dark; it happens in *real life*, too, and to all of us.

Pressing On...Anyway!

What do you do when you don't feel like pressing on? Why, you keep pressing right on anyway, if you are sensible. You set your best self in command and issue the orders, and you keep right on, whatever your feelings or circumstances happen to be.

There is much to be said for the ability to command ourselves. We are under discipline, and life is the time for action, not for brooding. Feelings are beneficial, but feelings must be kept in their proper place and shown who is master. This is the time for reason to take over and think things through, instead of just feeling about them. If experience teaches anything at all, it teaches that some tasks are so important that they must be gone through with, whether we feel like it or not. Many and many a time we have gone to work when we felt like staying home, because the work had to be done. Many and many a time has a mother cared for a child when she didn't feel like it. Many and many a time has someone gone out of his way for his friend, when he didn't feel like it. It was the call of duty, sounding above such petty things as feelings or moods.

We have little respect for the man who works only when he feels like it. A young man was questioned by his employer as to why he had absented himself from work.

Why, you keep pressing right on anyway!

His reply was that he was not feeling very well. "Young man," said the boss, "as you go through life you will find that a very large proportion of the world's work is done by people who are not feeling very well."

And if this is true in things temporal, how much more in things spiritual! Can we imagine explaining to the Lord when we stand before the great white throne that we are deficient in patience, or peace, or purity because we just didn't feel like putting forth the effort to change? Shall we explain *then* that things were too difficult, or too discouraging—when we had such a magnificent future before us?

Some of the best Christian work has been done under discouraging circumstances, by men and women who had a hard battle with self and many opposing forces. Are

we having a great battle? There have been others. Recall Elijah under the juniper tree, hungry, exhausted and despairing; Paul in Macedonia, with "trouble on every side, without were fightings, within were fears"; Jesus in Gethsemane, His soul "exceeding sorrowful unto death." But note that none of these great examples let themselves be overcome by depressing circumstances. The dark hour was but a brief interlude, not their whole existence.

So why not take their example and learn to keep on pressing on, the more zealously when skies are dark? Things are not as bad as they seem—they couldn't be. It is only that our feelings have strayed from control and betrayed us. Let us learn to say to ourselves, You know in your heart that God is in heaven, and that His promises are true. You know the reward awaiting the faithful will repay any effort on your part a thousand—nay, a million—times over; and you know that the overcoming life is the only truly satisfying and truly rewarding life. You know these things, I say, so never mind how you feel at the moment. Feelings can be fleeting; feelings can be deceptive; and feelings can be corrected. Press on, and

the dark mood will pass (it always has) and the sun will shine the brighter for the victories gained.

New Opportunity

Nothing succeeds like success, and nothing strengthens the morale like standing up as a man and battling it out with a problem when you would much rather run away from it. And when it is all over, we will wonder why we wasted so much time worrying about it, and making ourselves—and others—miserable.

One of God's best gifts to man is tomorrow morning, a new start every twenty-four hours. How seriously we should take advantage of it, and learn from the mistakes of the past to avoid the Slough of Despond. By this time we should be able to recognize its landmarks. There is no need to go on and on wading in its mire. If we are much given to discouragement or pessimism, we should do something about it, for these moods tend to leave their mark, even though they pass away. Not only is it in our power to correct our despondency, but better yet to undertake a way of thought and life that will prevent it.

Peculiar?

SEVERAL times in Scripture God's people are described as a "peculiar people." For example, in I Peter 2:9, "Ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people." Again in Titus 2:14, "... that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works."

We have been called to be a "peculiar people." What does "peculiar" mean in this context? In everyday English, we think of peculiar as meaning strange, queer or eccentric. But Biblical meanings and English meanings are not always the same.

When Paul mentions "a peculiar people" in Titus, he qualifies his statement in this way: "a peculiar people, zealous of good works" (Titus 2:14). He points to that which is peculiar to the high standard of God; in other words, like God, not like men.

There are two definitions of peculiar even in the English dictionary that do not mean strange, queer or eccentric. The word is from a Latin word *peculiaris*

which means "a private property." It has nothing to do with being strange or queer. Its first definition is "one's own, not owned in common." This is the meaning intended by the Biblical writers. When God said peculiar people, He was thinking of "one's own, not owned in common," in other words, something special, singular.

The second definition is "not like anything else, distinctive, individual, special."

This last definition is very similar to the definition of the Greek word translated "peculiar." It means, "acquisition; purchased possession, saving." Another meaning is, "being beyond usual, i.e., special (one's own)."

This thought is conveyed in a number of the newer versions. The Scofield Bible translates the term: "a people of His own."

The New English Bible phrases it, "To make us a pure people, marked out for his own."

The Living Bible has this thought: "To make us his very own people with cleansed heart and a real enthusiasm for doing right things for others." Note the distinguishing quality: doing "right things for others."

The Jerusalem Bible says we must be "self-restrained and live good and religious lives here in this present world while we are waiting in hope for the blessing

which will come with the appearing of the glory of our great God and Saviour."

Other translations are: "Eager to do good" ... "A new people, zealous of good works" ... "A people belonging to God."

Peter describes the singular qualities of these special people in I Peter 2:9-10: "But ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should show forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvellous light." These peculiar people are those marked out for God's own.

In Revelation 21 Jesus says that the "overcomers" shall inherit all things. This sets them apart as a special, singular, peculiar people.

There are times, of course, when the word "peculiar" might seem appropriate, in the judgment of a non-understanding world. If this were not true, something would be wrong; it would suggest that we were fitting in too well.

God's prophets all through the ages were not popular people, and His people are not popular today. Those who have committed their lives to obeying God will not be popular. But they will be special to the Lord, and they will be His eternal possession—He will save them with an everlasting salvation. What an honor!

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The shortest route to the Kingdom of God does not go through the Slough of Despond. Much of the depression we struggle with can be prevented if we just take action.

As our treasures are laid up in heaven, as we are less and less attached to material things, our peace of soul will deepen and widen. Looking down upon the storm-swept lowlands where we fought our battles, we shall thank God that we did not quit when we felt like quitting, but pressed on—regardless—to victory.

Things Too Near...and Dear

Another possible cause of our spiritual lows may be an over-preoccupation with things present. So easily can the objects, interests and activities at hand obscure the realities of the future. The age we are living in, with its imminencies of delight or disaster, *should* keep us in close touch with God. But it doesn't. And we have to keep telling ourselves again and again that we must make haste, that we must work *now*, while it is day, that opportunity is not forever. As someone has said, "We have all eternity to celebrate our victories, but only one short hour before sunset in which to win them."

But what if there seems to be no tangible cause for our lack of zeal? What is the cure? *How* can we achieve that constancy that will win God's favor?

Generating Zeal

There is no un-caused lack of zeal. If we really believe, nothing whatever will be able to quench our zeal. Probably the most common problem is that we live too close to the things of time and too far from the things of eternity. We need occasionally to step back and see our lives in proper perspective, as they really are, and our future as it really can be.

If Brother Nichols were to step into our presence this morning, can we imagine what he would say to us? Wouldn't he immediately start telling us the wonders of the glory ahead and urging us to do all we can to be there? This was his pattern; and indeed, what better way can we build zeal and enthusiasm than by covering the walls of our minds with vivid pictures of the reward? This was the whole secret of our founder's constancy. Day in, day out, whatever he was doing, his mind was actively exploring the wonders of the New Age, revelling in its delights, exclaiming at its joys.

Can we afford to do any less? We, who live in a world more indifferent and more corrupt than he knew, can we afford to spend less thought in the world to come than did he—if we hope to be there with him? It will help us, too, if we review and re-review the evidence, to know anew what is the firm foundation beneath our faith. Then let us picture the Day that is coming—with ourselves

Making the most of a bad situation was the special ability of God's people in all ages.

right there among the happy victors. With this type of thinking active in our minds, how can we be anything but spurred to action!

We cannot take this aspect of our faith too seriously. Someone of religious dedication has said it in these words: "What a different life Christian men and women would live throughout the week if they kept in their thoughts the palaces which are to be their homes, the crowns which they are to wear, the dignity which belongs to them, and the greater dignity which they may win by the gentle speech, by the courteous manners, the gracious temper, the truthfulness, the uprightness, the industry, the purity which should distinguish them as the sons and daughters of God—if they would think of all the wealth and glory that will be theirs."

Yes, *if*. Here is the basis of our problem with indifference. We forget. If we can conquer this, we should have no problem.

*If we only saw the glory
Christ so soon with us will share;
We would read His word with pleasure
And would study it with care.*

*If our minds were not so crowded
With the cares and things of time;
If our thoughts could reach the kingdom
And explore that blissful clime:*

*If we'd contemplate the future
Looking thence for sure rewards;
If we'd tune our ears to listen
To those sweet and heav'nly chords.*

If. That is the whole solution, keeping our minds actively absorbed in our visions of the future. We cannot see; we cannot know. But we can imagine, and such imagining is well within the realm of what God wants us to do; for has He not promised more than we have seen, or heard, or imagined? Oh, what can be too hard to remember, or do, for such a reward!

Then, once we are spurred, we must *keep* the spur, be constant in our effort. "Yo-yo" living is not *Christian* living.

(Continued on page 23)

What's My Score?

What's my score, Lord?
MY score.
I know I almost lost my temper today—
ALMOST, Lord, not quite—
And there was that half-truth...
On top of the sting of envy...
And the story I colored just a bit—
And I was so ashamed
To be called by Your Name
When questioned.

But Lord, consider—
I read and meditated on Your Word
For one whole hour today...
That I went to choir practice
When I was really tired,...
That I gave up something
I really wanted to do...
Just for YOU—
And I spoke softly, kindly,
When I really didn't feel like it...
Plus the selfless way
I serve my family every day.
Doesn't all that HELP
To even up the score?

You say the score is not the one
That I am seeking, Lord?...
That I must do more,
MUCH more, before
I'm ready for Your Kingdom?

How DO you rate me, Lord?
Is my lot hopeless, then
Because I fell again,
Because I failed
In some of the smallest things
Of this my day?

"Not hopeless, not a moment so.
I only ask that you do GROW,
And GROW and GROW and GROW...
'Till only good your day shall show
And only love your heart shall know,
And ALL your interests, ALL your joy
Shall be in Me and for My good.

"Then, someday, my child,
I'll take you for...
My Love, My Joy, MY OWN!"

The Perfect Coupling: Faith and Obedience

BELIEF is vital to life. We become what we believe. Only from the heart do the real issues of conviction and life proceed.

However, and unfortunately, to be convinced that a given line of action is right or advisable never guarantees that we will follow it. Our judgment and our actions are often at variance, for the passions in the average person speak louder than the convictions of the heart, and the will yields to them instead of exercising its prerogative power of decision.

All of which means that we do not instinctively do all that we know. Conviction is vital; we must be convinced that our gospel is truth, that our beliefs are proven, that our confidence is sure. But these alone are not enough to merit God's approval—we must obey. Faith and obedience must be linked in an inseparable bond.

Because of their perfect coupling of faith and obedience Paul wrote an encouraging compliment to the Church in Rome. He told them, "Ye became obedient out of the heart unto the mould of teaching unto which ye were delivered" (Rom. 6:17, Rotherham). "The mould of teaching" became the true message of salvation and deliverance to them—because "ye became obedient."

God's plan, purpose and principle may be thought of as a mold into which the believer's life is poured so that he may become like God in moral purity. Just as molten metal fills every indentation of the inner surface of a mold and comes out bearing the form which was in the mind of the molder, so he who yields himself unreservedly to God will come forth fashioned anew into the image of His design when God's work and purpose in him is complete.

But how is this molding accomplished? The method the Romans used is the same method we must use: obedience. "Ye became obedient out of the heart." We must obey, and we must obey "out of the heart." Our whole life and being must be committed, all our thoughts, feelings, motives, ambitions, and desires recast to fit the shape of the mold which God has made for us. For only the perfectly molded image will receive His mark of approval and His eternal blessing.

MM

The Security of Insecurity

AN AVALANCHE thunders down a mountainside, sweeping with it strong rocks and trees, dwellings and barns all as though they were pebbles and matchsticks in a stream.

The earth quakes, and strong buildings come crashing to the ground.

A cyclone roars into a village, mercilessly cutting a path of devastation across the peaceful scene.

A mountain rumbles and quakes, and almost before anyone knows what is happening the long-silent volcano comes alive, spewing forth venomous smoke, lava and hot ash, destroying all life and vegetation for miles.

In each case, the inhabitants had felt secure. Though they had been living on the edge of danger, they were unaware, hence unconcerned, unafraid. Not until the devastation arrived did they realize their peril. Their imagined security was *insecurity*.

If only they could have been aware of their insecurity and so taken action to assure their safety.

So with us. How much safer the feeling of insecurity that moves us to seek greater and more solid and sure security!

Imagine, if you can, the hopeless, helpless feeling that must overwhelm those who see normally solid, dependable landmarks suddenly shifting, sliding, rumbling or cracking, who feel the instinct to run to a place of "safety" when—alas!—where can they go?

Our news media today reports other

types of insecurity—in the social, political, and economic realms. The world is quite literally bursting with problems, many of them too great for human solution. Pondering the problems facing our world today leaves one with a feeling of helpless insecurity that results from constantly shifting—and deteriorating—values. What can we do?

Security is often defined as a comforting amount of material goods. It creates a picture of warmth, comfort, settledness, with no "risk" blowing a chill air to bring a shiver.

Who wouldn't rather be "secure" than "insecure," whether in material goods, health, emotions, or human relationships? Yet one danger signal needs to be given very definite attention. We have all heard where hurricanes took devastating tolls of lives because people heard and read of what was coming but failed to take heed, because it all seemed so impossible.

We have been warned that if we are too secure in this world, we will find ourselves *insecure* in that which matters most. How easily we may be lulled to sleep by a false sense of security! Though we have enough for all our wants, we may still be in "want" of insecurity.

Yes, we *need* insecurity. We need to feel un-secure, because here we are not at home; this world is not the limit of our vision.

There is a place for the uncomfortable. Said the apostle Paul, "I take plea-

sure in infirmities, in reproaches, in necessities, in persecutions, in distresses, for Christ's sake: for when I am weak, then am I strong" (II Cor. 12:10). Previously Paul spoke of his experiences with shipwreck, prison, beatings, hunger—experiences that would make anyone feel insecure. Is he now taking pleasure in *further* difficulties?

The Psalmist (91) speaks of the only completely secure place as that which is "under the shadow of the Almighty" (vs. 1). "I will say of the Lord, He is my refuge, and my fortress: my God; in him will I trust" (vs. 2).

A fortress means protection, but there must be an awareness of danger to need protection. There must be insecurity before one can feel the need for divine providence. We seek a refuge only in time of need.

"Surely he shall deliver thee from the snare of the fowler, and from the noisome pestilence. He shall cover thee with his feathers, and under his wings shalt thou trust: his truth shall be thy shield and buckler" (vs. 3-4).

Would we run to hide under His wings if there were no sense of insecurity around us? As we read the newspaper and see the unsettled condition in the world, the strife and tumult at home and abroad, the problems in our cities, we are alerted to the fact that we truly need to have our security in Him who "was and is, and is to come, the Almighty." "God is our refuge and strength," and how could we know what this means if there were no tumult?

Let us thank God for the insecurity about us that forces us to look to Him for *true* security. When all about us is shaking, Jesus would have us "look up, for your redemption draweth nigh" (Luke 21:27).

It is a lesson well illustrated by the experience of a noted scholar who, in his preteen days learned what he considers one of his greatest lessons of life.

It was his first job, serving as painter's helper to a friend of the family. His boss, perched uneasily aloft, was retouching some windows three stories up, and the lad's job was to hold the ladder to prevent any mishap. All was going well when suddenly the ladder shifted disconcertingly to the right. Acting on his instinct, the lad quickly pulled the ladder back to the left to rectify the misalignment. "This small action," he recalls now some sixty years later, "separated me from my job more quickly than you could say good-bye. I learned the lesson well: You don't straighten tilting ladders, particularly if they tilt too far right."

It is a lesson we all need to learn. Don't straighten tilting ladders. Prevention is better—far better—than cure. Better to prevent the problem in the beginning than to try to rectify it when you are thirty feet from the ground. Better yet, lean your ladder where it is impossible for it to shift; then you never have to worry about the shifting ladder.

There are times when we as Christians must climb—climb to higher heights in our spiritual lives than we ever dreamed ourselves capable of reaching. But if we anticipate the problems and not trust any earthly support for security, we should have no fear. If we just position our ladder right, if we lean it on the windowsills of heaven, then no earthly shakings or shiftings will trouble us. Whatever comes, we will be secure. MM

Popular expressions are sometimes misleading. They call it the rush hour around 5 o'clock when you sit in your car for 20 minutes waiting for the traffic to move six feet.

We Are What We Allow

THE FOLLOWING quotation has been recommended for people in trouble who exempt themselves from personal responsibility for that trouble.

"Little befalls us that is not in the nature of ourselves. There comes no adventure that does not wear the shape of our own thoughts. Deeds of heroism, for instance, are but offered to those who for many years have been heroes in obscurity and silence.

"Whether you climb the mountain or go down into the valley, journey to the ends of the earth or merely walk around the house, none but your self will meet you on the highway of life.

"Be false, and falsehoods will ever haste to you. Give love, and adventures will flock to you throbbing with love. They all seem to be on the outlook for the signal we hoist from within.

"Fix this somewhere in plain sight, as a daily reminder, that 'it is in ourselves that we are thus and thus.'"

This is what Jesus said, "From within, out of the heart of men, proceed evil thoughts, adulteries, fornications, murders, thefts, covetousness, wickedness, deceit, lasciviousness, an evil eye, blasphemy, pride, foolishness: all these evil things come from within, and defile the man" (Mark 7:21-23).

Someone once said that we hold the knob to the door of our heart, and we can keep that door closed against evil if we will. But once we open the door to evil, to just one, more will come trooping in. If we open only to the good, we will have only good in our thought-company. MM

May We Not ...

Look into the mirror of Truth and then go away and forget what manner of man we were (James 1:23-24).

Sit down to eat and drink and rise up to play (Exodus 32:6).

Put our hand to the plow and look backward (Luke 9:62).

Honor God with our lips and deny Him by our actions (Matt. 15:8).

Attempt to remove the mote out of our brother's eye while a beam is in our own eye (Matthew 7:3-4).


Be zealously affected in a good thing only when a superior is present with us (Gal. 4:18).

Think of ourselves more highly than we ought to think (Rom. 12:3).

Pray to God for forgiveness of our sins and then fail to forgive others for their sins against us (Matthew 6:12).

Spend a lifetime developing a reputable character and then spoil it by a little folly (Eccl. 10:1).

Ants... and Ants



THE CREATION above us is glorious beyond description. But what about the miniature marvels that lie under our feet?

Every square inch of the soil on which we walk contains hundreds of minute insects and plants—all living, growing wonders of creation. In a single handful of dirt may be a dozen different kinds, each with its own special story. The variety is sure to include an ant.

Among the many varieties of ants is one known as the leaf-cutter. As his name suggests, the leaf-cutter ant has singular abilities. His extremely sharp jaws operate much the same as we use scissors. With these special jaws he snips a V-shaped cut in a leaf and then pulls at the leaf until a small part tears off. Holding the small bit of leaf over his head like an umbrella, he carries it to the ant nest, which may be as far as a mile away.

Into the nest he goes with this bit of leaf, down long sloping passageways, to a series of chambers which may be as far as ten feet below the ground.

When he reaches the chambers which are his home, a worker ant is waiting for him. The worker ant takes the scrap of leaf from him, chews it to bits, and deposits the remaining bits on the floor. Another worker ant puts a piece of growing fungus on the chewed leaf.

In a short time the leaf becomes covered with fungus, growing small nobs that look like miniature cauliflowers. These nobs are food for the leaf-cutter ants, carefully planted and raised by the ants themselves.

Conditions for growing the fungus are kept as ideal as possible. The chambers, or rooms, where the fungus is grown are kept at a uniform and warm temperature. Humidity is also kept high. This is done by controlling ventilating shafts that let air into and out of the chambers. The amount of carbon dioxide gas is also kept high in the

“farming” rooms—at a level four times greater than outside air. This is exactly what the growing fungus needs, and it thrives.

Not only do the ants raise their own “cauliflowers”; they also keep their gardens weeded by constantly picking out all foreign fungi and throwing it away. Instinctively they know exactly what to do.

Halfway around the world, in Africa, is a totally different type of ant, the driver ant.

Driver ants are noted for their long, well-organized marches. Driver ants march in columns. In the center of each column are the reddish-black workers, little ants marching close together at great speed. At each side of the column march the bigger soldiers, waving their pincher-like jaws, ready to attack anything in their way.

Driver ants live on meat. Any grub, worm, or insect in their way is completely devoured. It is said that a swarm of driver ants can devour a massive elephant to the bone in less than three days.

These vicious worker ants are completely helpless in sunlight. Direct rays of the hot African sun can kill them in as little as two minutes. But these remarkable ants have a solution for this. When they reach a patch of filtered sun, such as sun through leaves, the soldiers form a tube with their hardy bodies. The workers travel through this tube untouched by sunlight.

If their path approaches direct sunlight, are they doomed? No, the soldier ants, using their own saliva for moisture, mix dirt and construct a tunnel of dirt across the sunny area. The workers pass through, untouched by sunlight.

Driver ants refuse to be stopped by anything, even a river. How can they get across a river? The soldier ants detach themselves from the column

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This Is Our Church



NOTHING ornate. Nothing extravagant. Not even an impressive masterpiece of modern architecture or design. Nevertheless we love it...because of what it stands for, because of the gospel that established it, because of the movement that brought it about, because of the hands that designed and built it,...because it is *our church*.

According to the dictionary, a church is first of all a building. Then it is the leadership of a religious body. Then it is the body or organization of religious believers themselves, the congregation. Lastly, it is the public worship and activities of that religious body.

For us, the church is all of these. And more. It is, most importantly, the principles and the way of life that identify and give meaning—both temporal and eternal—to what we lovingly call “our church.”

A Building...

Nothing huge, imposing or ornate. Among structures, even those in the community, the building is modest. This, too, was according to plan. It was designed not to impress, but to inspire; not to be seen, but to serve. And serve it does.

The original structure was erected by our founder and his followers in the year 1907. The group, then in its twenty-seventh year and having a membership of about ninety persons, had for the first time set up permanent headquarters, Rochester being the city chosen.

Upon locating in Rochester, projects were undertaken in order of priority—the missionary work of the group being the first and on-going concern, and necessary housing for the membership second. A rented church building, about three miles from the chosen location, served as a place of public worship where regular weekly services were held. Other local buildings were engaged from time to time, or the large “Megiddo Mission Tent” was set up and used for meetings in nearby neighboring vicinities.

But the time arrived—and after less than four years in the city—when all agreed that the group should have a church.

In his typically orderly, organized manner, the founder and leader of the group, L. T. Nichols, drew plans for a structure which he felt would be well suited to the needs of the group, and estimated the total cost of the project and the resources of the group, as nothing was ever undertaken unless there was sufficient to complete it. (Non-members were not asked to subscribe even one cent to help defray expenses.) Materials were the only monetary outlay, as the membership, together with their leader, volunteered to contribute all labor. Construction was no sideline activity for these people. The group had already, during just four years in Rochester, erected more than forty houses in the neighborhood.

According to Brother Nichols’ calculations, the total cost would be about \$5,000. As soon as the funds were gathered and in the bank, the project was begun.

The church is a white frame building on a concrete foundation. Though it has been remodeled numerous times, it is still the same basic original structure. The church received its most major face lifting in 1950, when new ceiling, new floor, new pews, and a new chancel were installed.

The main building in its original construction was 88 feet long and 36 feet wide, with seating capacity for 400 people. The original pews were of chestnut, finished and fitted with comfortable covered cushions. The pews were all the designing of Brother Nichols, and the cushions and coverings were made by the women of the church. The rostrum and front area of the church were carpeted with red; lighting was by electric bulbs (described at the time as “the best in the world”), and the building was heated by a furnace.

Distinctive among the features of the building—in both its original and its modern form—are the mural decorations. The interior walls of the church are finished with artistically lettered Bible texts which form the foundation of our faith and remind us constantly of our goals and obligations as

Where We Worship, Pray and Praise...



Church Sanctuary



The Chancel



Rear View of Sanctuary



Adult Bible Study Room (Church Basement)



Left to right: Tape recorder, cassette player,
high speed duplicator, tape storage shelves



Church Recording Studio

Above picture, left to right: two mixing consoles, tape recorder.

participants in the work of God. On the rear wall of the church, on a large painting of the earth's globe, is lettered this impressive Bible text: "As truly as I live, all the earth shall be filled with the glory of the Lord"—a continual reminder to worshipers of the promise of God.

A Leadership...

The second definition of a church is the leadership. And truly, an organization owes its entire existence to its leadership. The apostle Paul recognized this when he wrote, "For though ye have ten thousand instructors in Christ, yet have ye not many fathers: for in Christ Jesus I have begotten you through the gospel" (II Cor. 4:13). Instructors are vital to any organization; even more essential are honorable and upright fathers. Our church has been blessed with both.

Leadership has been continuous, from its founding by Brother Nichols to the present, as Brother Flowerday, who knew our founder personally until 21 years of age, leads on, pointing out the way of holiness and principle by precept and by example. His entire life has been one of dedication.

A People...

Numerically, we are few, not worthy of reckoning among the nations. But numbers are not our goal. Our goal is quality, and quality seldom comes in quantity.

We are obscure and little known; but so were Jesus, and Israel, and the New Testament heroes.

But smallness and obscurity do not limit our aspirations. We are aspiring, with all who serve God in sincerity and in truth, to membership in God's great eternal Church, a congregation that has been in a process of development for nearly six thousand years. Membership in this group is honorary and based entirely on character. This is our goal now, to develop in our individual lives the character that will meet the approval of the Great Judge when He returns, and be recompensed with eternal blessings, even "life for evermore."

A Commitment...

The church is, in its deepest sense, a commitment to a way of believing and a way of living grounded solidly in the Bible as the Word of God. We are here not to do as we please but as we ought.

We are committed to give ourselves to acquiring a practical and working knowledge of God and His plan as revealed in His Word, and to conform our lives to the pattern of Christ in prospect of receiving the greatest goal ever sought by humankind: eternal life. In the words of Scripture, this means a commitment to "not doing thine own ways, nor finding thine own pleasures, nor speaking

thine own words" (Isa. 58:13-14). We are here to live as under the eye of God; to seek first His kingdom and the righteousness by which we may be accepted for a place in that Kingdom.

We are committed to choose the good and refuse the evil, and to confess and correct the wrong.

We are committed to love as we have been loved; to serve as we have been served; to help as we have been helped; to do to others as we have been done by, in Christ.

We are committed to provoke one another to love and good works, to uphold principle, and to give ourselves to a purposeful and meaningful life; to build faith, encourage zeal, and promote brotherly kindness. *We are committed* to radiate joy, to inspire hope, to cultivate patience, and to exemplify absolute purity and self-control in our daily lives.

A Vision and a Promise...

All of the above is in prospect of securing, with all the people of God in all ages, an eternal inheritance in the Kingdom of God which will soon be established on this earth. All is in prospect of sharing, individually and in real life, the great reward of immortality our God has promised—even eternal life!

This means we have a totally different way of looking at life, the world and the universe. We see all as building together toward this one foreordained climax: the Kingdom of God on earth. Such has been the plan of God from the beginning. And when the task is complete, our earth will be numbered among the heavenly, glorified worlds and filled with immortal inhabitants.

This is the purpose of the creation. This is the meaning of our church.

Announcing Abib

The Abib season is approaching once again. The new moon following the March equinox occurs this year on April 14. Accordingly, Abib First will fall on the evening of April 13 and continue through April 14, Bible time being measured from evening to evening (Lev. 23:23).

The day will be celebrated at the Megiddo Church with special services of prayer and praise marking both the beginning of the New Year and the remembrance of Christ, His birth, life, work, ministry and future destiny.

Plan now to join us for this sacred season. The anniversary of Christ's New Passover this year (Abib 13) will occur the evening of April 25, followed by the anniversary of His Resurrection on the morning of April 28.

“And So Much the More”

**“And let us consider one another to provoke unto love and to good works: Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is; but exhorting one another: and so much the more, as ye see the day approaching”
(Hebrews 10:24-25).**

WE ALL tend to trust ourselves. We confide in ourselves. We depend on ourselves. We live, instinctively, too close to ourselves and too separated from others, particularly, the body of Christ.

This is the problem which our text addresses. In this passage each member of the household of faith is given a special commission on this wise. Each is to “consider one another to provoke unto love and to good works” (10:24). It is in the present tense: “let us keep on considering one another.” We are to keep on thinking of one another and to keep on encouraging one another.

There is a sideline benefit in this plan: how can we encourage one another—without encouraging ourselves!

The first command is that we “provoke” one another, first to love and then to good works. That word “provoke” is a strong word. It means to “sharpen.” It is used to describe our preparation for something. Unlike the word which provokes to anger, envy or jealousy, we are to provoke one another to love. When we worship together, we are to provoke each other to goodness, kindness, virtue, and every high and holy aspiration. We should be constantly helping each other to look up, and over, and ahead.

How are we to do this? By “not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is; but exhorting one another and so much the more, as ye see the day approaching.” Do you hear the crescendo in these words? No time to let any good work diminish. It is to be “so much the more, as ye see the day approaching.”

There have been some who felt that they could believe in God and give their hearts to Him wherever they are, that they did not need fellowship with brothers and sisters in Christ. To a certain extent this is true. We can

serve God wherever we are, even if we be alone. But it is not the situation most desirable. And when one has opportunity to be with those of like faith, he has a duty to them and to himself.

Again, some have felt that righteousness is a matter between each one of us and God. Again this is true in a certain sense. We are individually accountable for what we do. No one can accomplish my spiritual work for me, nor can I do anyone else’s. However we are not totally independent of one another either. We cannot feel that we are free and on our own. If we do feel that way, then we must be much wiser than God, because God declared that we do need one another. God instructs us to keep on considering one another, insofar as it be possible; to exhort one another, to join in fellowship and worship with one another—and again, hear the crescendo: “and so much the more, as ye see the day approaching.” It is a responsibility we cannot shirk.

There was no doubt a singular reason for the original writing of these words. Perhaps some in the church felt it was too much trouble to assemble. “It isn’t worth it,” they said. “There’s too much discouragement, too much frustration, too many obstacles, too much danger. We can’t gather with the saints.” Another problem at that time may have been the real danger of active persecution.

But whatever the “reasons,” we are not to act that way. The writer of Hebrews felt that even then, whenever possible, the gain would outweigh the loss. We are to go out of our way to fellowship with one another, to encourage, exhort, and strengthen one another. We are *ters* in Christ. To a certain extent this is true. We can serve God wherever we are, even if we be alone. But it is

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Captive Heroes

Scene Four

Time for Change

TIME on Jehovah's clock moves steadily forward—six, seven, eight. The hour grows late, and steadily later, although proud Babylon is not aware.

With the passage of years, there are few survivors of the original band of Jewish exiles. A new generation replaces the old, a generation reared in Babylon and (unfortunately) more adjusted to Babylonian life.

But there are exceptions. A few of the new generation retain their firm devotion to God and an unflinching loyalty to the faith of their fathers. Among these are such names as Zerubbabel, the son of Shealtiel, grandson of Jehoiachin (one of the last kings of the Davidic line); Jeshua, the high priest; and the prophets Haggai and Zechariah.

Unknown to the revelling throng in Babylon, these loyal servants of Jehovah, faithful despite long years in a heathen city, are keeping alive in their hearts the vision of the day their God had promised—a day of release, a day when they would be able to return to their native land. Patiently they are watching, waiting, waiting...for the end.

The final hour approaches. Babylon's hours—and minutes—are numbered. And so the clock of God strikes—nine, ten, eleven. But no one in Babylon hears the sound of its gong.

Babylon is apparently as powerful as ever, but she is in more trouble than she realizes.

A beast mightier and more terrible than Babylon was prophesied. Omnipotence had decreed an end upon the ruthless power of Babylon. Not forever should she hold sway over the people of the Lord. Not forever should she hold in ruins the chosen city of Jerusalem. Babylon was living under a curse of doom. God's man, Jeremiah, had decreed it: "He shall come up like a lion from the

swelling of Jordan unto the habitation of the strong; but I will make them suddenly run away from her.... And I will punish Bel in Babylon,...yea, the wall of Babylon shall fall."

The Wall of Babylon shall fall. When? How? No one knew. But an end had been decreed. "These nations," the Prophet had said, "these nations shall serve the king of Babylon seventy years."

Seventy years. No more.

It was now the seventieth year—and time for a change.

The Medes and Persians under Cyrus are besieging the city, which is protected by impregnable walls and provisioned for twenty years. Yet these are flimsy defenses when Jehovah takes a hand.

On a housetop near the palace of Belshazzar (the weak, vain son and regent of Nabonidus), Zerubbabel, a prince of Israel, talks with his father Shealtiel of their nation's future and the possibility of Divine intervention. In the distance the king's impious feast roars on, soon to be interrupted by the handwriting on the wall, swiftly followed by the fall of the city, which means the end of the long Captivity.

Characters: Zerubbabel leader-to-be of the
returning Jewish exiles
Shealtiel father of Zerubbabel
Ephraim house servant
Malchus house servant

Setting:

On a housetop near the royal palace in Babylon. The sound of music and revelry can be heard coming from the palace, where Belshazzar is holding a great feast for all his lords.

It is night. Shealtiel, now an old man, is talking earnestly with his son.

Shealtiel:

Alas, my son, that I should live to see
This night, this night of anguish and of shame!
That I, who fear and serve the Lord Most High,
That I, who all these weary years
Have kept the holy vessels of His house,
Brought from Jerusalem afar, so long ago:
The golden plates, the cups, the spoons, the bowls,
Which graced the Temple of our God so fair,
Which held the holy shewbread and the meats
Offered in sacrifice. I've kept them free
From tarnish, and from thieves I've guarded them,
Even as my life, and from the touch
Of unclean heathen hands. And now—and now—
The heathen handle them as common things.

Zerubbabel:

'Twas wanton sacrilege, my father. For the king
Needs not these vessels for his impious feast.
Tis only to insult and triumph o'er
The God of Israel, and all His sons hold dear.

Shealtiel:

Yes, my son Zerubbabel, 'tis true.
Sacrilege upon sacrilege, woe worth the day!
Swine's flesh in chargers dedicated to God!
Wine quaffed by scoffing, pagan lords, while yet
They praise the gods of silver, wood and stone,
Curse and defy Jehovah, Lord of all!
It cannot be such blasphemy may pass
Unpunished. God will act in such a time as this,
Unless they do repent.

Zerubbabel:

Perhaps, my father; I pray it may be so.
So weak we are, so helpless in this hour.

Shealtiel:

Is there nothing thou canst do, my son, to help?
Thou hast a name at court, for wise thou art,
And talented. The king hath schooled thee well
And set thee over his business.
Canst thou do naught?

Zerubbabel:

My father, were it in my power to do,
My very life I'd gladly give to save
These holy vessels from this dreadful fate.
But even now the sacrilege is done;
The feast is laid, a thousand of his lords
Acclaim Belshazzar king of kings, a god!
The music of the feast offends the air.
'Tis in God's hands; 'tis only He can save,

And I have reason to believe He will!

Shealtiel:

Reason, my son?

Zerubbabel:

Yea, Father, reason, for of late I've talked
Much with the holy man, Daniel the wise;
Counsellor of kings was he in days of old,
But barred from court since this Belshazzar reigns.
Too wise, too holy is he for this time;
A fool prefers the flattery of fools.

Shealtiel:

I know him well. And what has been his word?
Surely whate'er he says is from the Lord.

Zerubbabel:

In far Jerusalem, so long ago,
The prophet Jeremiah was his friend
And teacher. When he here did come,
Daniel brought with him memories and books
Containing wisdom of this holy seer.
Seventy years, he prophesied, should pass,
And then our long captivity will end.

Shealtiel:

And is the time at hand?

Zerubbabel:

It is. The years
Are nearly spent. The years threescore and ten
Are run. This night of sorrow yet may be
The night of our deliverance. Another seer,
Isaiah the magnificent, once spoke a word
Concerning Cyrus, who should set his captives free,
Open the gates of brass, the kings subdue, and
Give command to build Jerusalem
Again our holy temple to restore.
May this not be—

Shealtiel:

(rising in excitement)

My son! My son! What other *can* it be?
The stage is set for God to act this night.
Outside the walls of Babylon, the Medes
And Persians shut us in. For many a month
Have they besieged the city; and their chief
Is Cyrus! It can be no other man!

Zerubbabel:

I hope and pray—yea, Father, I believe
It shall be as you say; yet how, and when
I know not, for the city walls are strong

And well provisioned. Time and plague may wear
Away the Persian host, while Babylon
Feasts in high scorn. Yet much we do not know.
Craft may yet win where force will not suffice.
I wonder.

Now for many weeks the troops
Outside the walls have toiled by day and night
Digging ceaselessly and hard—for what?
I cannot think it is for exercise.
All Babylon has wondered, but secure
In mind they crowd the wall, and jeer, and curse.

Shealtiel:

If this indeed may be the time foretold,
Zerubbabel, my son, my hopes let me reveal.
Babylon the great may be my grave,
For I am old; but thou art young and strong.
When once the chains are broken, and the law
Goes forth to build again the temple great,
A leader will be needed. Even thou
May worthy be to be employed of God
In this most noble work.

Zerubbabel:

But how may this be, Father? Our house
Is humble, not of priestly line, or rich.
Of princely blood, 'tis true, but fallen low.

Shealtiel:

God's noblemen are noble by their lives:
His priests are where He finds them. Wealth and fame
Are nothing. What Jehovah first requires
Is purity of character, and a life
Blameless and holy; knowledge of His will
Is next, and then determination firm,
Devotion single-minded to His cause.
If you have these, or can develop them,
Then God may use you. Labor to this end.

Zerubbabel:

Thy words, my father, fill me with strange hopes
And fears, for well I know how weak I am.
'Tis strange to hope on such a night as this.
The feast roars on. But hark! What cry is that?
A change—a note of terror! Is it the Medes?
(Looks out over parapet to the city around)
But no! The street is peaceful, and the moon
Shines calmly over all. And yet that cry
Swells louder and more fearful. I must know—

*(Enter Ephraim, in great excitement; shrieks and cries
can be heard in the distance)*

Ephraim:

My master! My master! Shealtiel, my master!

Shealtiel:

(Seizing and trying to calm him)

'Tis I, Ephraim.
Be quiet, man. What ails thee?

Ephraim:

Oh! My master,
A strange and dreadful thing has happened!

Zerubbabel:

Dreadful?

Ephraim:

Aye! Dreadful! The palace is filled with dread.

Zerubbabel:

Have the Medes broken in?

Ephraim:

Nay, 'tis worse than that!
Heard ye not the cry of terror?
All Babylon---

Shealtiel:

Tell us! Tell us the worst!

Zerubbabel:

Or the best.

Ephraim:

The feast was at its height; the impious king
Held in his hand a goblet from the House
Of God, stolen from old Jerusalem,
And drank with unholy lips to gods of stone,
Of gold and silver, brass and clay and wood,
And praised them loud, defying Yahweh's name.
And then, a hand appeared! a hand of living fire,
And on the wall it wrote in letters of flame
Strange words. The feasting stopped.
The king grew pale,
And stood with shaking knees. Loudly he called
For all his wise men, to interpret what he saw.

Shealtiel:

And did they come?

Ephraim:

They came, but nothing could they tell.
Their mouths are closed, like Chaldees long ago
When Nebuchadnezzar dreamed of kingdoms four.
A fearful sight to see—a thousand lords
Groveling and screaming to Marduk, Nergal, Baal,

All gods and demons from afar and near,
But still there is no answer.

Zerubbabel:

Daniel! Oh, that Daniel were there!

Ephraim:

He hath been sent for. The queen mother
Remembered him. Not long have they to wait.

Shealtiel:

Astonished. Astonished am I at this news.

Zerubbabel:

Astonished, shall we say, but not surprised.
It is as I said, Father. This thing is of the Lord.
This is the night of Babylon's despair—
And Israel's hope. Ah! glorious day of days!

Shealtiel:

At least one final warning.

Zerubbabel:

More than that, 'tis my belief. The time
For warning's past. God speaks—and now He acts!
(*Enter Malchus*)

Shealtiel:

Speak, Malchus! What is done in the palace?
Hath Daniel come?

Malchus:

Yes! Come indeed!

Ephraim:

And did he read the writing on the wall?

Malchus:

Aye! that he did. 'Tis Babylon's doom!

Zerubbabel:

'Tis as I said, my father! The time has come!

Ephraim:

What said the writing?

Malchus:

Before the trembling king he took his stand,
Fiery and bold for all of his gray hairs;
Reminded him of all his impious crimes
With sternness and with power. Then he read:

MENE, MENE, TEKEL, UPHARSIN.

God hath numbered thy kingdom and finished it.
Thou art weighed in the balances and found wanting.
Thy kingdom is divided and given to the Medes and
Persians.

Shealtiel:

A fearful sentence, aye! Men have died
For telling such truths to kings. What of Daniel?

Malchus:

Belshazzar, weakling that he is, now looks
Upon him as a god. Great honors he has forced
Upon him; a crown of gold, a chain,
Emblem of office as third ruler over Babylon—
An empty honor, so it seems to me—
Raised to captain of a sinking ship!

Zerubbabel:

The writing—does it stand? I must see it
If I risk my life.

Malchus:

Nay, my lord. The writing faded, and the feast resumed.
The king believes not this shall be in his time,
Or so it seems. So foolish he behaves.

Zerubbabel:

Foolish indeed. God's salvation will not tarry.
Stand still and see—the waiting will not be long.
(*A crash and loud cries from the street. All rush to the
parapet and look down.*)

Ephraim:

The Medes and Persians! See them come!
A torrent of iron and brass flows through the streets!

Shealtiel:

Torches—a river of fire—flaring above their heads!

Zerubbabel:

Into the palace court they pour!
The gate goes down. (*Crash and yells.*)
The fight is sharp—but short—the tide of men rolls on.
The palace is surrounded. The banquet hall
Becomes a prison!

Ephraim:

The city gates are opened! The Persian horde
Pours in like a flood. O Babylon!
(*to Malchus*) How came the foreguard in? The wall
Has not been breached: to scale it is beyond

The power of men.

Malchus:

A secret I can tell, Ephraim.

Zerubbabel:

A secret?

Malchus:

Cyrus hath turned the waters of Euphrates
Into his lake. The bed is bare and dry,
And 'neath the wall his army comes. The gates
Beside the river were unlocked by treachery.

Shealtiel:

How knowest thou this?

Malchus:

The watchman at the river gate
Whispered the news to me as I went past.
Ornan the son of Eber; he hath been
In touch with Cyrus, and he bears the king
Belshazzar a long grudge of deadly hate.
This is his vengeance.

Shealtiel:

This is the hand of God.
Babylon is fallen! The prophet's words
Shall be fulfilled. Seventy years—
A long, long lesson, bitter and hard.

Zerubbabel:

May Israel have learned it well, my father,
That this need not be again. As our nation
Has sown, so also has it reaped.

Shealtiel:

To learn the ways of nations round about,
To serve their gods, has been our weakness great.
Oh, may this falling be forever past.
Now may Jehovah and His mighty truth
Be all our strength, for ever.

Ephraim:

Look! look! the crowd parts. The guards—
From the palace they come.
The nobles are led away in chains!

Malchus:

The king
Without his crown, his clothing torn, his hair
And beard disheveled, is brought forth. A spear
At his back, and at his throat a sword.
Belshazzar! a god! Where—where is he now!

Shealtiel:

Who is the noble rider
Who meets them?

Zerubbabel:

'Tis Cyrus, the servant of the Lord, to pour
His judgments on this city vile, this sink
Of all iniquity. Thus Babylon
Goes down. Jehovah's word fulfilled
Before our eyes!

Ephraim:

How shall this be? a change of master,
This is all. Perhaps for worse.

Zerubbabel:

Nay! Ephraim. The Word of God is true.
Our bondage to its end is drawing near.
Be patient, wait. Not long. Stand still and see
The long-awaited salvation of our God!

Ants . . . Ants

(Continued from page 13)

and scout around for bits of twigs and leaves—anything that will help them float. Within minutes they return. The ants crawl up on each other, the weaker workers at the center and the strong soldiers on the outside, until they form a ball larger than a man's fist. The ball of ants rolls into the stream, is caught by the current, and floats until it is

caught on the opposite shore. If the column of ants would make a ball too large to float, part of the workers and soldiers will go together and form another ball which will also float across the stream.

Driver ants have an uncanny sense for direction and organization; and unlike many humans, they always seem to know where they are going. This is all the more amazing when we realize

that driver ants are totally blind!

Driver ants and leaf-cutter ants are only two of the many varieties of ants in God's marvellous creation. Shouldn't we praise the great Creator even more, as we realize the marvels of His creation—even the marvels that exist under our feet? MM

Adapted from "The Christian Reader,"
September, 1978, p. 104.

If Ye Be Constant...

(Continued from page 9)

The "Abounding" Apostle

The apostle Paul felt deeply this need to keep his own zeal, and that of his brethren, always steady, growing, abundant, to counter the natural ebb and flow of life. Terms like "abounding...more and more...always increasing" are common in the writings of this dynamic and constantly forward-looking apostle. They tell us that Christianity is never a stagnating thing. It is always growing, living, abounding; never diminishing, never standing still but always increasing, always moving forward.

Hear the Apostle's earnest words of entreaty to his brethren in Thessalonica: "Furthermore then we beseech you, brethren, and exhort you by the Lord Jesus, that as ye have received of us how ye ought to walk and to please God, so ye would abound more and more" (I Thess. 4:1). More and more—abounding—this is sure prevention for indifference.

This fervent Apostle had yet more to say about the ever-increasing devotedness which every seeker for salvation will have. "And the Lord make you to increase and abound in love one toward another, and toward all men, even as we do toward you: to the end he may stablish your hearts unblamable in holiness before God, even our Father, at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ with all his saints" (I Thess. 3:12-13). It is a case of doing more and more, even though it be that which we have already done the most of; for we have not yet reached the ideal of the life which is in Christ. If we are not doing more and more, we will find that our zeal diminishes and we will do less and less.

We yearn for the coming Day of Christ. And our anxiety is proper. This is just what Jesus would have us do. If we were not anxious, if we were not looking eagerly forward, we would be unworthy indeed of our high calling. Ahead, just ahead is the Day to which all of God's men and women in all ages looked forward. For them it was centuries in the future. For us, it may be tomorrow—or even today! As we think about it, how can we be anything but constant in our efforts toward holiness? How can our effort ever slacken, our faith ever dull, or our days ever be ordinary?

This is no time for any relaxing. As our former pastor, Sister Skeels, used to say, "Keep the tension tight." How we need to tighten it more and more as we see the Day approaching. This is the time for abounding love, increasing faith, growing goodness, flourishing love and

There is no un-caused lack of zeal.

overflowing Christian consideration. God, the angels, and all who have gone before us would have us "always abounding in the work of the Lord" (I Cor. 15:58). We are to have a "Faith which groweth exceedingly" (II Thess. 1:3). So many commands are focussed upon the intensity, the fervor, the constancy we need, we who live right in the era of His return, we who live in the last hour of the day, when it is so easy to fall asleep. Our love must "abound yet more and more in knowledge and in all judgment; that ye may approve things that are excellent; that ye may be sincere and without offence till the day of Christ" (Phil. 1:9-10). Until when? Until "the day of Christ." Was this not penned especially for those who would live to see that day, even for us?

Oh, let us hear. Let us take heed. The Lord has spoken. The final hour is upon us. God forbid that the end should come and find you or me "sleeping." In the words of Jesus, "what I say unto you, I say unto all, Watch"—constantly.

Oh, the magnificent rewards, the eternal glory, the matchless joy that is reserved for us— if WE be constant!

MM

Some people carry their hearts in their heads; very many carry their heads in their hearts. The difficulty is to keep them apart, and yet both actively together.

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And Still She Speaks

Extracts from sermons, discussions, talks, comments
by Rev. Maud Hembree (1853-1935).



Do not pretend to be a Christian unless you are striving to put away all evil. Of all abominations in the sight of the Almighty, a hypocrite is the greatest!

There is so much good for us to think about! No reason for our harboring evil thoughts, angry thoughts, hateful thoughts. The mind can only think of so much; if we keep our minds right, we will walk right and do right. There is so much we can read and think of when we are sitting down, when we walk by the way, when we are lying on our bed awake. When we allow the evil to come, the good thoughts are not ruling. Think of the good all the time. If a dream passes your mind you are not responsible for that.

We must learn to be ashamed of every sin. The trouble is, we are more ashamed to have the brethren know of our evil ways than the great Mighty God. Someone said the other day, "Do not tell what I did; I do not want _____ to know it." There is no virtue in continuing to do wrong until we see it is going to be known. We must learn to feel worse for God and His angels to know of our evil ways than anyone in the world.

Are we working and busy getting rid of evil thoughts? Get busy and learn this Word of God. The only way to get rid of evil thoughts is to fill the mind with good thoughts, with thoughts of God and His Word. Never go to picture shows or read foolishness. You will never get your thoughts right if you read foolish things.

Do you think a just and righteous God would require as our whole duty that we fear Him and keep His commandments (Eccl. 12:13-14), if it were impossible for us to do so? It can and must be done. But only few will take the trouble to do it.

God wants us to have no respect of persons, but to respect character only.

"The Lord rewarded me according to my righteousness; according to the cleanness of my hands hath he recompensed me" (Ps. 18:20). How will the Lord recompense us? According to the cleanness of our hands, not according to Christ's cleanness. We have to clean up. Is this not a grand, glorious plan! The Lord does not require money nor good looks, but He does call upon you and me to be righteous and clean in His eyesight.

If you have to work for ungodly people or be associated with them in your work, just close your eyes and ears to foolishness. Let them go their way, and be thankful the light of truth has shone upon your pathway.

"Rebellion is as the sin of witchcraft, and stubbornness is as iniquity and idolatry." Ah! stubbornness. If you are stubborn, put it away at once; it is as iniquity and idolatry. So many cannot acknowledge their transgressions and be easily entreated, because of their stubbornness. How much better family life would be, if all would practice to let the higher principles govern them!

How does faith come? By reading the Word of God. It increases our faith. Those holy men of old wrote as they were directed to write; they were penning the things that we need the most, and when they wrote, they had an object in it to impress some wonderful lesson upon our minds. And if we study and investigate what has been recorded, we can have faith to continue steadfast to the end.

God loves the humble, meek and lowly. And unless we get down to the depths of humility, He will not love us.

Meditating on the Word

(Continued from page 17)

a task of such gigantic magnitude as the complete remaking of ourselves to the perfect standard set by God, we need every possible assist available to us.

Again we are to "exhort" one another. "Exhort" is a wonderful word. It means "to speak positively." When we speak often to each other, declaring His truth, revealing our faith in Him and our commitment to His will, we exhort one another. When we help each other to see where we have done wrong, where we should be careful, where we can do better, we exhort one another. And notice it is a mutual action, with mutual benefit. No two brethren can "exhort" one another except both be spiritually stirred.

How much of this is recommended? There is no measured amount, only a trend, an increasing trend: "And so much the more, as ye see the day approaching." These words were written most of all for those who would see that Day approaching. And who can this be, but ourselves? Who has ever lived nearer to the culmination of the ages than we?

If this word meant anything to the Christians of the first century, if it stirred and warmed their hearts, what should it do for ours, we who do indeed find ourselves already in the foreglory of the approaching Day! How we should consider one another, encourage one another, exhort one another, and provoke one another to love and good works. And more and more intensely as we see the Day approaching!

MM

SO WHAT DO YOU KNOW?

Of Whom Was It Said?

1. "There is yet one man, _____, by whom we may inquire of the Lord: but I hate him; for he doth not prophesy good concerning me, but evil."
2. Of whom was it said: "_____, my brother, and companion in labour, and fellowsoldier, but your messenger, and he that ministered to my wants."
3. "And _____ was learned in all the wisdom of the Egyptians, and was mighty in words and in deeds."
4. "Greet _____ and _____ my helpers in Christ Jesus: who have for my life laid down their own necks."
5. "And they said, _____ the centurion, a just man, and one that feareth God, and of good report among all the nation of the Jews, was warned from God by an holy angel to send for thee into his house, and to hear words of thee."
6. "We shall not find any occasion against this _____, except we find it against him concerning the law of his God."
7. "And _____ increased in wisdom and stature, and in favour with God and man."
8. "_____ the _____ did me much evil: the Lord reward him according to his works."
9. "For _____ hath forsaken me, having loved this present world."
10. "Take _____, and bring him with thee: for he is profitable to me for the ministry."
11. "I commend unto you _____ our sister...for she hath been a succourer of many, and of myself also."

12. "Nevertheless God, that comforteth those that are cast down, comforted us by the coming of _____; and not by his coming only, but by the consolation wherewith he was comforted in you, when he told us your earnest desire, your mourning, your fervent mind toward me; so that I rejoiced the more."
13. "By faith _____, when he died, made mention of the departing of the children of Israel."
14. "This charge I commit unto thee, son _____, according to the prophecies which went before on thee, that thou by them mightest war a good warfare; holding faith, and a good conscience; which some having put away concerning faith have made shipwreck: of whom is _____ and _____."
15. "Let not my lord, I pray thee, regard this man of Belial, even _____: for as his name is, so is he; _____ is his name, and folly is with him."
16. "_____ believed God, and it was imputed unto him for righteousness: and he was called the Friend of God."
17. "_____ was a man subject to like passions as we are, and he prayed earnestly that it might not rain."

Answers:

1. Micaiah, I Kings 22:8
2. Epaphroditus, Phil. 2:25
3. Moses, Acts 7:22
4. Priscilla, Aquila, Rom. 16:3-4
5. Cornelius, Acts 10:22
6. Daniel, Dan. 6:5
7. Jesus, Luke 2:52
8. Alexander the Coppersmith, II Tim. 4:14
9. Demas, II Tim. 4:10
10. Mark, II Tim. 4:11
11. Phebe, Rom. 16:1-2
12. Titus, II Cor. 7:6-7
13. Joseph, Heb. 11:22
14. Timothy, Hymeneus, Alexander, I Tim. 1:18-20
15. Nabal, I Sam. 25:25
16. Abraham, James 2:23
17. Elijah, James 5:17

Prophecies Fulfilled

Bible prophecies are truly being fulfilled, so much trouble in the world, even to petty vandalism.

It is so good to be serving the Lord. How grateful we should be to our founder for his strength and fortitude in all the hours he spent working to dig down through the lies and find the real truth of the Word of God.

I was pleased with the book "Elijah Then Christ". It is most interesting and helpful. I am now reading the current *Message* and shall be looking forward to the next issue. They are filled with good things to read and meditate on.

When reading the letters from Poland, I felt so sorry for the Brother and Sister. They must be having a terrible time. How fortunate we should feel to be living in England and America, where at least there are plenty of goods in the shops for those who have the money to buy.

Swansea, South Wales M. S.

Always "Weeding"

How important to keep the weeds out of our spiritual garden. Every day there seem to be those little irritations, peevish, hasty words to be watched for. How much better to stop and think and weigh our thoughts and words.

We have so much to thank God for every day. There is so much sorrow and tragedy in the world around us. Even to live in a country that is at peace is such a blessing. Surely our Lord's coming must be very near. All the signs spoken of for the last days seem to be here, except the return of Elijah before Christ. Truly we need to be very careful of our ways and hasten to improve while we still have time.

Calgary, Alberta L. S.

Signs of the Times

How grand to have this saving truth to lead us in the narrow way, illumining the path around our feet, and leading us on in the Way. Truly we have so much for which to give praise and thanks unto the Lord, so few consider how great is His so ample provision for us, even to our small-est need!

Jesus relied on His Father for help, knowledge and strength during His ministry. His whole trust was in His heavenly Father, and His one direct and certain aim was always to do the things which pleased Him. How we should be encouraged also to give the same loving obedience, because we know Christ is risen, and alive for evermore, "King of kings and Lord of lords." And we know by the signs in the nations of earth that soon He is coming again.

We were most interested in the extracts from the letters from the Brother and Sister in Poland, which were in the July *Message*. What hardships they have experienced. How appreciative they are for the things sent them. Their country is certainly in a terrible state. Troubles are with us, distress of nations, just as was predicted for the time of the end of Gentile times. May we take heed to watch, to redeem the time given to us to be ready to meet our Lord and King.

May we keep close watch on ourselves, and keep watching for the first golden rays of Zion's Glad Morning, and keep our eyes fixed on the glories and the wonders to be unfolded to the Faithful Bride.

Warwick, Australia J. & A. B.

God Is Our Refuge

We are privileged in these distressing worldly days, strife, strikes, fear of war all gripping the people around, that we can take courage from the Words of Wisdom recorded on your cassette tapes.

God sends the process, but we have to do the work. None can do it for us. How could we qualify otherwise? Keeping close to Jesus, naught can harm us, seeing God is for us if we are keeping His commandments. They are not grievous, not something impossible. It is just that they have to be kept if we desire Life more than anything else. What can this existence offer? It is merely a passing of time, to end in nothingness—unless, unless we have God for our refuge against the coming day of Judgment.

Let us renew our efforts to be worthy of the Everlasting Arms underneath. It's a great comfort in these perilous times, when men's hearts are failing them for fear. They know not where to turn for aid in life's perplexities.

How sad to read in the *Message* of the conditions in Poland experienced by the Brother and Sister. There's enough for all, if it were properly shared out.

Crewe, England N. T.

Grateful

Here's thanking you for the latest copy of your Magazine. Please do keep in touch as usual. Life could never be the same here for me without your *Megiddo Message* monthly magazine.

As you have been so kind in the past, to hear from you is really an experience well worth looking forward to. Very many thanks to you once again.

Castlebar, Eire M. K.

New Life

My life has been transformed and the new life is one that is truly free. To have one's eyes on the Kingdom changes everything! I am sincerely trying to control my speech, what I think, and what I say. I am striving to overcome and to be pure in heart, to think on those things which are of good report and to not let my mind drift.

It is the little, petty things of life that we have to deal with and overcome. It is the

constant attention to the trifling details of life, to have a good attitude and not to allow yourself even a second's enjoyment with the jealousies, dislikes, and injured feelings to deter your pursuit of the Kingdom. What can compare with it in this life?

We have been warned that this world is vanity and its likes will soon pass away and only those who used this life to prepare themselves will be considered worthy of unending life in a world of untold and unsurpassed joy, peace and happiness.

People in general feel they can play both sides of the fence, be as worldly as possible, yet everything will be brushed aside at the judgment. The foolishness of such thinking is only too evident when the Old Testament is filled with examples to the contrary.

We are in a conflict of gigantic proportions, and only those who overcome all their evil and disobedient propensities in this life will be qualified to live with the Lord in His Kingdom.

Baton Rouge, Louisiana D. K.

■ FINALLY, BRETHREN

Staying On Course

THE CHRISTIAN life has often been compared to climbing a mountain, uphill until the very end, though with great scenic views and marvelous details of beauty along the way. It could also be compared to driving up a twisting mountain road, narrow and dangerous, when watching the road signs is imperative. One could think of train travel and the necessity that the engineer keep on the track by obeying the signals exactly. The airplanes that travel from city to city must be constantly in communication with control towers, a vivid illustration of the need to stay "on course" in life by staying in contact with the Master Planner. The ship captain needs to watch his compass, the radar screen, and other instruments. Whatever mode of travel one chooses, one needs some means of guidance to avoid dangers, even if it is the danger of stubbing a toe.

Surely all who have been called to be followers of the Lamb, who may someday have their names written in the "Lamb's book of Life," have a "way" they must travel, along the Lord's appointed course. They need to stay on course by observing carefully His written signposts in the Bible, continually looking for directions, as well as keeping in communication daily with the Director, who has promised all needful help.

There is real and constant danger of getting off the road by forgetting that there will be twists and turns, curves and hidden bumps, and taking our eyes off the directions. We are meant to be watching the road signs all along the way. If we do not, we are in danger of missing the next curve and ending in a heap of brokenness, unable to go on with what the Lord wants us to do because we wanted to go in our own way.

There is little essential difference between the effects of being too ambitious, wanting something too "big" and "successful," in the world's eyes, in Christian work or in our own Christian lives, and being apathetic, wanting something tiny and quiet. We can hinder—even stall—our progress by either.

The twists in the path, the rocks under the sea, the bumpy air, the curves skirting cliffs, are there to help us. They are not easily defined or anticipated; they are different for each person, and for various periods in each one's life. We have to be like Paul and be able to say, "Yes, Lord, with your strength I can." The course changes, and there is always someone to ask, "What are you doing?" The only question that matters is the one that comes to us from the Lord as He speaks to each of us with His words to Peter: "What is that to thee? Follow thou me."

Any other way is off course.

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