

Megiddo Message

Look Up...and Consider

We Are Part of the Plan

Do you ever wonder if God exists? Go outside on a starry night. Look up, and ask yourself, *Where did all this come from?*

In the words of the prophet Isaiah who spoke for the Creator Himself: "Lift up your eyes on high, and behold who hath created these things, that bringeth out their host by number: he calleth them all by names by the greatness of his might, for that he is strong in power; not one faileth" (Isa. 40:26).

In this issue we are featuring the stars, visible evidence God has provided us of His great, ongoing plan of salvation: worlds so distant that the light reaching our eyes tonight left them millions of years ago (traveling at eleven million miles a second); worlds so numberless that the *galaxies* must be counted in billions—and every galaxy is composed of hundreds of billions of stars.

We who are tempted to think and be so small, we who so often see only a few inches in front of our nose—we need to **LOOK UP ...AND CONSIDER** the heavens above us and all they tell us about ourselves, our Creator, and our destiny.

Are we ever tempted to ask, **IS**

GOD...? Can't we believe that God has provided this magnificent display of His handiwork to show us conclusively that **GOD IS!** Indeed, how can we look at any of the heavenly bodies without realizing that they are the handiwork of God?

We can confirm our belief even more by **STOPPING BY GALAXIES ON A SNOWY EVENING** and pondering this visible evidence of the glory of God. Indeed, if the stars were visible only one night in a century, the whole world would be on its knees to witness the glory of that night.

Perhaps we should commit to memory a portion of Addison's paraphrase of the 19th Psalm: "The spacious firmament on high, with all the blue ethereal sky, And spangled heavens, a shining frame, their great Original proclaim...Forever singing as they shine, **THE HAND THAT MADE US IS DIVINE.**"

But the question arises: Is there a conflict between what the Bible says about the stars and what the scientists tell us? Are the stars whirling, burning spheres of gasses incapable of supporting life? How can we harmonize the **BIBLE AND ASTRONOMY?** Thanks be to God, there is no conflict when we separate speculation from observation. There is

never a conflict between the Bible and true science—how can there be, when the Bible tells *how* and *why* God works, and science studies the visible evidence of that work?

We need to realize, too, the ultimate—that our Lord's prayer shall one day be fulfilled and God's will be done right here on this earth as it is now done in heaven. The whole creation has purpose and destiny. Someday our earth will join God's family of shining, glorified worlds when His work upon it is complete, when Christ is King over all the earth and everyone who lives will be another shining, happy immortal, equal to the angels of God! (Luke 20:35-36).

When we look into the starry vault, we are not looking into an empty void of matter and space. We are looking into a realm where there are countless numbers of worlds teeming with life and activity, the homes of the multitudes of glorified members of God's heavenly family. Even this very moment some of them are looking upon the activities on our planet. **ANGELS ARE WATCHING.** Heavenly observers are always on duty.

Yes, we are not alone. The heavens disclose a great plan, and **we are part of the plan.** 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 life, all men, and all things.

We believe

—in the Bible as our only source of knowledge about God and His purposes and plans for the salvation of humankind.

We believe

—in Jesus Christ the Son of God and our Perfect Example, who was born of a Virgin, ministered among men, was crucified, resurrected, taken to heaven, and seated at the right hand of the Father, crowned with immortal glory, 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 humankind 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 applying the precepts and principles of the Word of God in our own lives, in this way 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

Unidentified quotations are from the King James Version. Other versions are identified as follows:

NEB—New English Bible

NIV—New International Version

NASB—New American Standard Bible

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

Goodspeed—The New Testament translated by Edgar J. Goodspeed

Moffatt—The Bible, A New Translation

AAT—The Bible: An American Translation

About Our Cover

Our cover photo is provided by the courtesy of Fran Bidy, Director, Strasenburgh Planetarium of Rochester Museum and Science Center, Rochester, New York.

Megiddo Message

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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; Newton H. Payne, President and Editor; Ruth E. Sisson, Executive Editor.

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MEGIDDO is a way of believing and living, grounded solidly in the Bible as the reliable Word of our Creator. A total view of life, the world and the universe, it sees all events, men and nations moving together toward one God-ordained climax: the Kingdom of God on earth. This has been the plan of God since the beginning. Christ will return visibly, bodily, as King, and the governments of this world will be joined to form a totally new worldwide government. When the task is complete, our earth shall be numbered among the heavenly, glorified worlds and filled with immortal inhabitants. This is the purpose and goal of all creation.



Look Up..

Go outside on a starry night and gaze upward. You will be doing something people have done from time immemorial. Marvel at the beauty, the majesty, the depth and vastness of the visible creation. Realize what a privilege you enjoy—you are seeing *firsthand* evidence of the work of your great Creator. These are *His* worlds, shining with *His* light. You feel like exclaiming with the Psalmist:

“The heavens declare the glory of God; and the firmament showeth his handiwork” (Ps. 19:1). And again, “O Lord our Lord, how excellent is thy name in all the earth! who hast set thy glory above the heavens” (Ps. 8:1). You continue: “When I consider thy heavens, the work of thy fingers, the moon and the stars, which thou hast ordained; what is man...” (vs. 3-4), and there words fail you. You look down and return to your own little realm of touch and taste, sight and feeling—a world so real, so tangible, so near, so all-absorbing.

But thanks be to God for the vision of the nighttime! Thanks be to God for providing an escape from the absorptions of the day and for granting mortal eyes a few small glimpses into the greater realms which lie beyond.

Today more is known about the universe than ever before. In the last few years scientists have invented all sorts of instruments to probe the heavens in an effort to answer the questions that perplex them. Powerful telescopes are used to observe the stars and photograph their activities. Radio telescopes capture signals from outer space and reveal more and more stars beyond. Advanced instruments analyze the light and heat produced by the various heavenly bodies. To help with “local” study (within the four-billion-mile-wide circle of our own little solar system) man-made satellites have been launched which can collect and relay information about the sun and the planets which revolve around the sun.

and Consider

*When I consider Thy heavens, the work of Thy fingers, the moon and the stars,
which Thou hast ordained; What is man, that Thou dost take thought of Him?
And the son of man, that Thou dost care for him? —Psalm 8:3-4, NAS*

All these sources are flooding men today with celestial information, which is being published along with hundreds and thousands of theories, conjectures and conclusions drawn by those who study and observe. The latter, we must realize, are but deductions and conclusions of human minds as they try to make sense and meaning of what they are discovering. But their information is necessarily incomplete. And theories are changing constantly. What was "certain" yesterday may be rejected today.

For insight into all the "why's" and "how's" of creation we must wait upon the Creator—God. But in the meantime, God is allowing us some almost unbelievable insights into the regions which lie beyond. Why? Why is so much open to view? Perhaps He wants to stimulate the faith of those few earthborns who are living in constant expectation of the great work He is about to begin on this planet, when the "Son of man" shall launch His flight from one of those heavenly worlds above and, accompanied by a great retinue of glorified angels, travel all the way across the unmeasured expanse to that little planet whirling on the outskirts of the Milky Way, that planet we call Earth.

Where Are We?

Scientists tell us that our planet is part of the Solar System; that is, we are one of nine planets (non-luminous bodies, in contrast with "stars" which give off their own light) which revolve around a nearby star we call the Sun, and reflect its light.

This Solar System is located in a vast rotating group of stars, gas and dust and probably many other planets we cannot see, altogether known as a galaxy. Our particular galaxy has been named the "Milky Way." (Some astronomers are now speculating that many stars in the Milky Way have planets circling them, as does our sun.)

The Milky Way Galaxy is only average-sized. Yet its vastness is almost beyond our comprehension. Its diameter is so great that if you had started across it in Adam's day, traveling steadily at the speed of light (186 thousand miles every second, or 11 million miles a minute), today you would be less than one thirteenth of the way across it! Light requires 80,000 years to travel from one side of the Milky Way to the other. Therefore we say that it is 80,000 light years across. To convert this distance to miles, we must multiply 80,000 by six trillion, for light travels about six trillion miles in a year. Our figure is 48 followed by

Can we even
dimly imagine
the meaning of
becoming a son or
daughter of the great
Creator?

Long ago the prophet Job observed that the "secrets of wisdom are double to that which is."

sixteen zeros—and this is the number of miles across our own home galaxy!

And if you were to leave our Milky Way Galaxy for the next nearest galaxy (Andromeda), you would have to travel another 2 million years—still at the rate of 11 million miles a minute—to reach it.

Such distance is beyond human comprehension. Yet consider this fact: So many galaxies have been detected in space that their current total is estimated at 200 billion! Not 200 billion stars, but 200 billion *galaxies*, each containing billions of heavenly bodies! A report released from a group of scientists using the telescope on Mount Palomar in California tells of a study of the small area enclosed by the bowl of the star pattern called the Big Dipper. Within the bowl formation alone they estimated that they could see a million galaxies!

Such vastness, such immensity, such complexity is mind staggering. But then, our minds need staggering occasionally. Our vision is by nature so limited, so earth-bound. It takes so little to blind us to what lies beyond. We need continually to broaden our view, to realize that the things which are so close to us are not all there is. We must learn to think beyond this life, with its small horizons, its limited pleasures, its joys and sorrows. We need to realize the greatness of the Being who has made us and who has called us to be His own. We need to keep ourselves impressed with the unknowable magnitude of what He has offered us. We need to open our eyes and see His creation as a whole, one perfect over-all enormous plan of which our earth is only one small, infinitesimal part. "The mercy of the Lord is from everlasting to everlasting" upon glorified beings somewhere in this mighty universe. Our lives began but yesterday, and without the sustaining power of our Creator

they would end this moment. How can we close our eyes to His greatness and become so absorbed in our own little sphere! How can we fail to open our eyes and minds to what God has done, is doing, and will continue to do as long as eternity rolls!

Clusters of Galaxies

Scientists tell us that the billions of galaxies in the heavens are not scattered helter-skelter through space. They are arranged in clusters. The Milky Way belongs to a small cluster of about twenty galaxies, which includes all the galaxies within two or three million light-years of the earth. Among these galaxies is one called Andromeda, on a very clear moonless night faintly visible to the naked eye. Actually, it is a whirling sea of thousands and millions of stars, a spiral-shaped galaxy much like our own. Only a haze of light of all these stars combined reaches our eye because it is so far away—two million light-years away. (This means that the light that reaches us left those stars two million years ago!)

Where are we in such immensity? And what does it all mean? Is there a limit?

Long ago the prophet Job observed that the "secrets of wisdom are double to that which is"—need we "double" the observations of astronomers to be impressed with the greatness of God's realm? And what then? Greater telescopes only reveal greater expanses filled with greater creations. Where does it all end?

Ages ago the prophet Jeremiah, inspired by God, declared that "the host of heaven cannot be numbered" any more than "the sands of the sea" can be "measured." A Greek astronomer who lived a few hundred years after Jeremiah boasted his superior knowledge: "There are only 1,056 stars in the heavens. I have counted them." A few hundred years later another scientist, Ptolemy by name, also

counted the stars and affirmed that the earlier astronomer was right. "There are 1,056 stars." Not until Galileo built the first telescope and looked through it did men acknowledge that there are many more stars.

And today, what lies beyond the range of our vision?

Our Place In It All

Who are we, frail creatures who inhabit this small planet Earth, and where do we fit in? Can the God who orders all this mighty, incomprehensible vastness even take notice of our little planet, to say nothing of the minute individuals who live and die upon it?

The answer is Yes! God is mindful of even the smallest creatures of His creation—if they are mindful of Him. If they are not, He lets them go their way. But if they are interested in Him and what He has to offer, they become His "special treasure," His own "prized possession." Try to fathom such a Being!

When we commit ourselves to live by His law and to fit ourselves into His pattern for our lives, He promises to take us in someday as part of His eternal, heavenly, glorified family! This is according to His "eternal purpose," which has been in operation for untold ages. "And ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty" (II Cor. 6:18). Can we dimly comprehend the meaning of *this*? Can we picture ourselves a son or daughter of such a great Creator?

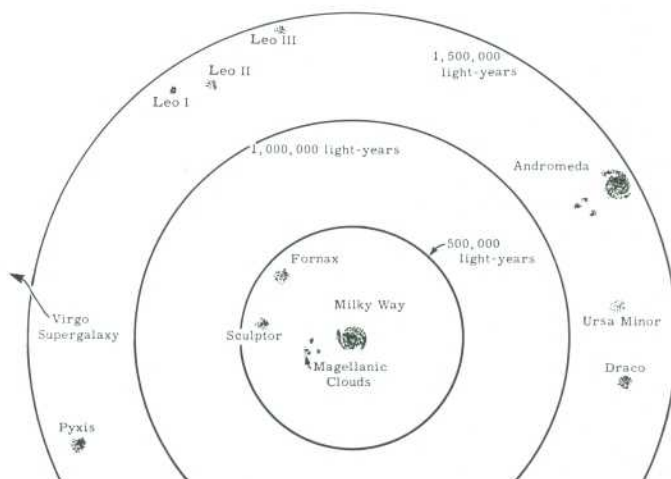
This is the blessing of the covenant He offers. We say, "This will I do," and He replies, "Then, this will I do." If we fulfill our part of the covenant, He will surely fulfill His!

Oh, how can we wilfully sever ourselves from the favor of so gracious a Being? How can we think for a moment that anything we have or desire or can do to fulfill our own lives is worth anything beside His greatness and His offer to us? How can we possibly even for a moment forget His offer of recognition, glory, honor and life eternal?

May our heartfelt prayer ascend continually to Him who orders our world and all the worlds in His vast universe, as we say and feel from the depths of our heart: "The Lord has done great things for us, whereof we are glad."

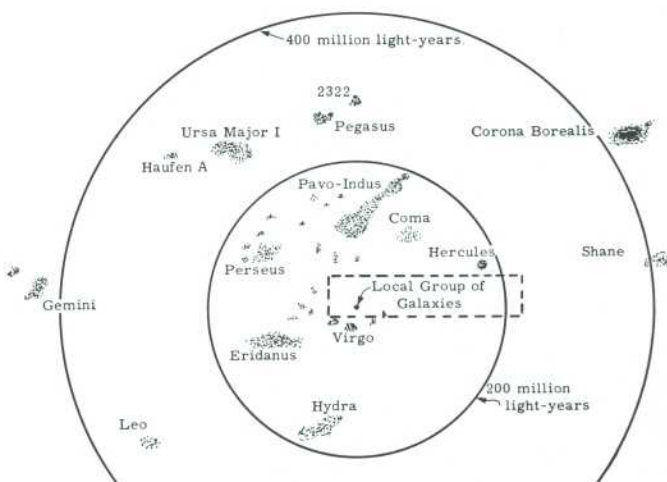
Prayer:

Heavenly Father, forbid that I should ever be so absorbed in my own little world that I forget the greatness of Your plan and purpose. I long someday to feel the pulse of immortality within my being. I yearn to share Your power, to touch Your majesty, to taste Your glory, to visit Your family, to belong to Your eternity.



Our LOCAL GROUP of Galaxies
—each galaxy containing billions of stars!

*According to one
eternal, ongoing purpose,
our Great God is
filling world upon world
with His glory—happy,
immortal people.*



But even our LOCAL GROUP of Galaxies (at center of drawing) diminishes to a pinpoint among the clusters of galaxies that make up the universes beyond.



Stopping By GALAXIES On A Snowy Evening

*"Can you loose the cords of Orion?"
God asked Job long ago (38:31). Once
telescopes were invented, skywatchers
began gasping at the power
of the Great Orion Nebula.*

My hands, stiffening in the cold, fumble clumsily at the Schmidt-Cassegrain telescope controls. The stars overhead glitter brightly in the moonless sky. Only the whirring of the telescope's guide motors interrupt the stillness.

Then suddenly, silently, it appears. NGC 6205. The Great Globular Star Cluster in Hercules. A brilliant, shimmering ball of more than a million suns 25,000 light-years away in our Milky Way Galaxy.

I rehearse statistics long since memorized: A Boeing 747 jetliner flying 24 hours a day would take 150 quadrillion years to reach it, and 170 million years to cross it. The fastest spacecraft ever built (Voyager 2) would take 35 million years to reach this cluster. An incredible distance...yet "in our own backyard" by astronomers' standards.

I stare at the sun-ball for several minutes, transfixed by its beauty, feeling that special closeness to God that comes at the eyepiece of a telescope. *How ironic, I think, that the glory of God's creation should be so still...appreciated by so few.* But then, was this not the mystery of Bethlehem's manger?

God's presence often comes silently and unnoticed.

I recall the words of Emerson that if in each century the world were shrouded in clouds every night but one, all of humanity would be on its knees in awesome wonder at the spectacle of the heavens.

I swing the telescope several degrees toward the Orion constellation, mentioned in the Book of Job (38:31). I focus on the Great Orion Nebula.

I am as dazzled by it this chilly evening as the first time I saw it. It is "only" 1,500 light-years distant, "only" 30 light-years in diameter...yet the astronomer William Olcott described it as "a glorious and wonderful sight.... Words utterly fail to describe its beauty."

I move on to Barnard's Star in the constellation Ophiuchus. This faint red dwarf 6 light-years away is the second closest star to our solar system. Yet if our fastest spacecraft had blasted off on the day Moses received the Ten Commandments, it would now be just one-fifteenth of the way there. The distance to our "second closest neighbor" is more than 4,000 times the diameter of our entire solar system.

My frigid fingers cannot endure this night much longer. But I must have one final look at the Andromeda Galaxy. NGC 224. A "neighboring" island of 200 billion suns lying 2 million light-years (13 quintillion miles) from our Milky Way. If you had counted one star each second since the birth of Christ, you would have counted less than a third of Andromeda's suns.

And yet, the Andromeda Galaxy has fewer suns than our own.

A "neighboring" island of suns, the Andromeda Galaxy lies only 150 billion years' journey away by spacecraft.

Actually, we can count only 6,000 of the Milky Way's suns with the unaided eye. To put things in perspective: If you took an ordinary photograph of

our galaxy, you would need to enlarge it to the size of all North America in order to locate a small point representing our sun. The nearest star would be another point 800 feet away. Then, with an electron microscope, you might be able to locate a point representing the planet Earth 1/30 of an inch from the sun. And of course, somewhere on that speck would be 5 billion human beings!

I ask the Psalmist's classic question: "When I consider thy heavens, the work of thy fingers...what is man, that thou art mindful of him?" (8:3-4). And yet God sent His Son to our speck.

Serious students of the nighttime sky, I've noticed, have a hard time ignoring spiritual realities. In a recent book, the noted English astronomer Sir Fred Hoyle acknowledged that the universe contains so many "anthropic coincidences" (intelligent accidents) that there is no logical escape from the conclusion that some higher "intelligence" was involved. Hoyle's arguments are even more impressive when he admits, "I am not a Christian, nor am I likely to become one as far as I can tell."

The faint drone of an aircraft high overhead this winter night rouses me from my thoughts. I disassemble the telescope slowly, locating the bolts, screws, and knobs by memory rather than sight.

Once everything is properly stowed indoors, I relax for a few minutes in a chair. My face and fingers tingle. But the chill of the night is far outweighed by the glory I have witnessed.

God's glory.

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Who are we, frail inhabitants of this small planet Earth? Where do we fit in? Can the God who orders this mighty, incomprehensible vastness even take notice of our little planet, to say nothing of the minute individuals who live and die upon it? The answer is Yes!

Is God?...**GOD IS!**

*Excerpts from the last recorded sermon
preached by our founder, Rev. L. T. Nichols,
February 11, 1912*

I never view any of the planets, or any of the heavenly bodies without thinking that they are the handiwork of God. They leave an impression upon my mind, and the more I think about them, the more settled I become.

The more I study the Word of God, the more I look upon His vast creation, the more I am caused to realize that I know so little. When I look out into the great expanse of the heavens, it causes me to feel my littleness. I feel that I know so little.

The Psalmist says, "The heavens declare the glory of God, and the firmament showeth his handiwork." When I look out and see these stars with their magnitude, it is a wonderful evidence to me that there is a God. I look out toward Neptune, two billion, eight hundred and ninety-eight million miles away from the sun.

I look up at Jupiter, there she is with her diameter of ninety-three thousand miles, almost twelve times that of our earth. Then I look at the Moon, showing her silvery arch; it is evidence to me that there is a Creator.

Then I look at the stars, the countless worlds above. I would like to meet some of those happy beings living there, see their happy home and take part in their pleasures.

Our earth is moving at the rate of 19 miles a second, 1,140 miles every minute. Do you know, since we opened this meeting she has traveled over one hundred thousand miles, yet so smoothly, without a jar—and she is moving at this lightning speed of nineteen miles a second!

Dare you say there is no Creator? tell me these planets on high do not show His handiwork? They tell of His existence, and anyone that doesn't believe can only be called a fool.

Go out and see the great ocean with her mighty waves dashing against the rock-bound coast; view the mighty tide. We followed the tide out miles into the ocean one time until, pretty soon, we saw and heard the waves like mighty mountains rolling toward us. Tell me that this mighty ocean has been in motion every day, that she has been going out and coming in

twice every twenty-four hours for millions of years, and there is nothing but happenstance behind it?

No, there is a Designer, there is a Creator who formed all things according to His own pleasure. And if this great Designer, the mighty God of heaven, has seen fit to tell us that the heavens declare the glory of God, and the earth shows forth his handiwork, why not believe it?

How grand when we realize it is all His handiwork, that it is the work of the Almighty, All-Wise, and Eternal God of heaven! Do you think that you or I could ever make a world, set it in motion, and cause it to go in its orbit at the rate of nineteen miles a second, one thousand one hundred and forty miles every minute of the day, and never stop, always moving at the same speed and velocity? Do you think all the men in the world put together could do such a thing as this? No! No wonder I feel my littleness; no wonder I feel my utter inability to grapple with the great eternity to come; therefore I am driven to something better.

I have in my investigations decided that there is a *real* God, I mean a *personal* being. I have satisfied myself that this Book is true, that it is the inspiration of the Almighty. I have looked at it with my little cranium, which is very small and holds so little. Oh, how little we know! so little when compared with the fathomless span which contains what we do not know. Our present knowledge is so minute that when we look at it, it only causes us to long to know more.

When I look out and view these mighty wonders it teaches me a lesson. There are other stars larger than these, I need not stop to say. But it tells me that there is a Creator, it shows me

the handiwork of the Almighty God. It took an Almighty God to create these planets and cause them to revolve upon their axes and in their orbits around one another in such precision that they have never a collision. That precision beats the railroads and steamboats—they are having collisions all the time. And if you could be taken for a trip to the happy land in one of those grand, wondrous worlds, you could see as many more worlds beyond as we see from our earth.

Well, a great astronomer said, "I am satisfied that if we only knew, there are a great many suns larger than our own beyond the power of the human eye to penetrate." Herbert Spencer was one of the greatest philosophers that ever lived. He didn't believe the Bible, but he gave me a great deal of evidence to prove the Bible true when he said, "There is not a man on the earth who knows anything of the origin of life or light." It told me it was the voice of inspiration that said, "O the depths of the riches, both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! how unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways past finding out." This great philosopher corroborated what the Bible said, thus strengthening my faith in its truthfulness.

Viewing the Handiwork of God...

Everywhere we go in this world, we see the handiwork of God. Start with me and go to New York, take ship and cross over to Liverpool. Travel along till we reach Belfast, go to York, cross over to Scotland and pass along till you come to Firth of Forth, pass by these cities and travel along till you come to Southampton. Cross over till you get into Germany and France. Go to Paris, and on until you pass the

Arabian Sea. Travel on to China and the Empire of Japan.

Travel back across Russia to Norway, then sail along till you come to St. John, leaving Greenland on your right. Pass on through Davis Strait and Baffin Bay till you get clear around to the shores of Alaska; go on down their shore till you get to old Oregon, where we lived for several years. There you may cast anchor and view Mt. Hood, and behold again the handiwork of God in our trip around on the earth, viewing its beauties. Behold the "Three Sisters," Mt. Jefferson and Mt. Shasta. I well remember these mountains (tells of climbing Mt. Shasta). I have been at the foot of them and washed in their snows many times. Why was I so much interested in these mountains? Why, to pick up items to prove to me that there is a God.

I never view any of the planets, or any of the heavenly bodies without thinking that they are the handiwork of God. They leave an impression upon my mind, and the more I think about them, the more solid I become; the more I look at these great things the more settled I become. This should be the way with every individual.

Well, you might pass along till you get to the great and wonderful Yellowstone Park where the geysers are spouting up three hundred feet high, and they come and go as regular as clockwork. You may stand there and listen

Believing right
is the most
important thing,
then acting in harmony
with that belief.

When I look out
and see these
stars with
their magnitude, it is a
wonderful evidence to
me that there is a God.

and pretty soon you will hear a mighty rushing and she will spout out with a thundering noise, and drop back again; and then out she will go a hundred feet in the air, and recede again; then two hundred feet, and back again; and then out she goes with a mighty bellowing noise and she goes three hundred feet in the air, and recedes. By that time she has reached her zenith, and she begins to get less and less till finally she recedes altogether, and you cannot hear or see one drop of water around that wonderful geyser in the Yellowstone Park as you stand there viewing the handiwork of God.

Pass along down till you get to California, New Mexico, and Mexico. Pass on down to South America; pass along down its western coast and around Cape

Horn, sail up along the Argentine Republic to Buenos Aires, then along to Brazil where the Amazon River empties into the ocean and rushes with such mighty power—she is the greatest river on the face of the earth, all others combined will not equal her. The great Amazon River goes out with such power and force that she plows into the mighty ocean and divides it in sunder, and two hundred and fifty miles from her mouth you can dip up fresh water where she has plowed through, moving part to the right hand, and part to the left.

And then will you tell me there is no Creator? Most certainly there is a Creator! The great God of heaven is the Creator. How do we know He is the Creator?

I know that He is a personal Creator because He says in the 1st chapter of Hebrews, 1st, 2nd and 3rd verses: "God, who at sundry times and in divers manners spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets, Hath in these last days spoken unto us by his Son,... Who being the brightness of his glory, and the express image of his person,"—Jesus is in the express image of His Father's person. I know He is a real, tangible, personal Being.

Now, there are a whole lot of things I would not need inspiration for, but it takes inspiration to tell me this. I don't need any inspiration to tell me about this trip around the world, about Mt. Shasta, or about the Amazon River. Or we might go across the Atlantic till we come to the Straits of Gibraltar, leaving France, Spain and Portugal on our left. Pass through and view the Rock of Gibraltar—it is a wonderful Rock—and I'll tell you, the truth of God is as firm as the Rock of Gibraltar. This Truth is

as firm as that because it comes from the God of heaven. And sail along into the Mediterranean Sea, past Morocco and Tripoli, to the mouth of the River Nile where she empties into the Sea; pass the Suez Canal and travel along till we get to Joppa where our water trip ends; and from there we may take rail and go up to the City of Jerusalem which is to be the metropolis of the world, "the City of the Great King." All this forces me to believe in a real, personal God, because of what I can see and because of what I read in the Scriptures of Truth.

By Inspiration...

Now Moses did not need any inspiration to tell what he did down in Egypt when he called the children of Israel out of bondage, or how they marched out, any more than I would need inspiration to tell about climbing Mt. Shasta; not a bit of it. But God steps in where man fails. Here is the dividing line. Historical accounts didn't need any inspiration; but God's inspiration comes in and makes known all that goes beyond our knowledge and experience.

I could not relate to you that God is a person, I didn't know anything about it; I never saw Him; but when the inspiration of God comes and proves the Bible true, and the Bible says He is a person, I believe our God is a personal being. Why? Is it because I am such a wonderful fellow, and have such a large brain? No, but because I can prove it by the Bible. This is the reason I believe it.

Be Converted...

When death comes, what good will all we have enjoyed be to us—unless we have let the Law of the Lord convert our souls?

And how are we converted? "The law of the Lord is perfect, converting the soul" (Ps. 19:7). These words are true. They were written by the inspiration of the Almighty. We need this inspiration, for how else could we know?

Some people tell you that you are converted by some sort of emotion, they can hardly explain how, or what, or why. They say it is some sort of feeling, and they attribute it to the Power of God. They say it is the Holy Spirit coming down into your heart. It takes possession of your very being, and in some mysterious way it turns you by its mighty power from a sinner to a saint and starts you on the road to glory.

Well, from my boyhood days I have seen a lot of such experiences, but we cannot find any such ideas set forth in the inspiration of God. But what do we find? "The law of the Lord is perfect, converting the soul." And if you ever become converted it will be by learning what the Law says; and then you must turn and throw away everything that is not in harmony with that Law. He who has not learned the Law of the Lord has never been converted.

Now if this was something that I had concocted in the little hours of the night during the 53 years of my preaching, then there would be a good reason for you to throw it away; it would be only the product of man, for I am only a man, and you should not trust in what I might say to you. But when it comes from the mighty God of heaven, you should believe it.

Don't Wait

Now throw away your old theory. You are waiting, and you will wait till you are ready to drop into the tomb and never be

converted if you are waiting for God's Holy Spirit to come down and give you a changed heart; you will never get it. Why? Because "God is not a man that he should lie," and He has told us, "The law of the Lord is perfect, converting the soul." If something else would convert the soul, He would be a liar. But you cannot find anything else between the two lids of the Bible.

I would like to have this Law of the Lord convert you tonight. It is the only thing that will do you any good. The first step is to realize that you need converting,

I *KNOW* there is a
God, I *KNOW* the
Bible is His Word
of Truth, I *KNOW* I have
this Word of Truth to
back up all that
I believe.

and that you are the one who has this work to do.

Paul declares, "I charge thee before God, and the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall judge the quick and the dead at his appearing and his kingdom." And after Jesus had gone way up yonder and was seated on His Father's throne participating in His glory, He sent back a message for you and me. It is recorded in Revelation 22:12. "Behold, I come quickly; and my reward is with me, to give to every man according as his work shall be." You will never get your reward as long as Jesus is upon the throne of God. He must return before you will be rewarded.

You need converting. You need this law to take hold of you, con-

vert your mind, and set you upon the right foundation. Believing right is the most important thing, then acting in harmony with that belief. Have a living faith, and you will be a converted man. There is no other way.

And how does faith come? We read in this Word of inspiration: "Faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God" (Rom. 10:17). Also, "Without faith it is impossible to please God."

Now I don't claim that the Holy Spirit has come down into my brain and revealed this or that to me. I simply tell you the chapter and verse where you can read it in so many words. What more can I give you? Look it over. Go in, through, under, and around it, and see if we have changed a single chapter, a verse, a sentence, a phrase, a word, a syllable, or even a letter. We have not changed it in the least, we have given it to you *verbatim et literatim* just as it dropped from the lips of the mighty God on high, the Creator of the Universe whose handiwork we view when we behold the heavens above.

I am a poor old man, gray haired, almost through my work, I have done the heft of my work. I have traveled far and near, I have passed through a lot of things. These are facts, there is no guess work about it. And I have passed through with my eyes wide open. I didn't go along snoozing; I was wide-awake and energetic, wondering where I could place my finger on something that would prove to me the truthfulness of the Bible. I have found the fundamental principles; I know I am right, I don't guess at it. I *know* there is a God, I *know* the Bible is His Word of Truth, I *know* I have this Word of Truth to back up all that I believe. MM



The Hand That Made Us Is *Divine*

The Nineteenth Psalm, as paraphrased
into English verse by Addison.

*The spacious firmament on high,
With all the blue ethereal sky,
And spangled heavens, a shining frame,
Their great Original proclaim.
The unwearied sun, from day to day,
Does his Creator's power display;
And publishes to every land,
The work of an Almighty hand.*

*Soon as the evening shades prevail,
The moon takes up the wondrous tale,
And nightly to the listening earth
Repeats the story of her birth;
Whilst all the stars that round her burn,
And all the planets in their turn,
Confirm the tidings as they roll,
And spread the truth from pole to pole.*

*What though in solemn silence all
Move round this dark terrestrial ball;
What though no real voice or sound
Amidst their radiant orbs be found:
In reason's ear they all rejoice,
And utter forth a glorious voice,
Forever singing as they shine,
"THE HAND THAT MADE US IS DIVINE."*

—Joseph Addison, 1672-1719

The Bible and Astronomy

Is There A Conflict?

I visited a planetarium recently, and I am puzzled by what I 'learned.' The astronomers say the stars are whirling balls of different types of gases, in different stages of their life-cycle, and that they have very high surface temperatures in which life as we know it could not possibly exist.

"If this be true, what about the angels? Where do they come from?"

In considering a subject like astronomy, it is very important to realize that there is a great quantity of known fact and a much greater quantity of theories and speculations. Often what is accepted as fact is a conclusion drawn from an assumption, something assumed to be true until proven otherwise. This is really

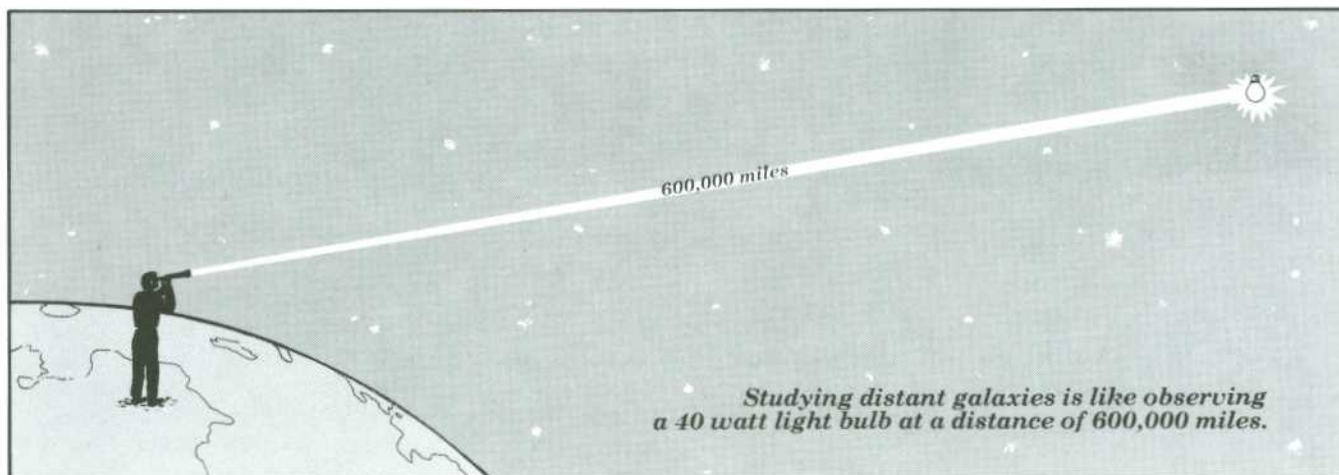
the only way science has of making progress, when factual data is difficult to determine. Conclusions drawn in this way are not provable by any means known at present. All such conclusions are subject to change whenever more discoveries are made. The scientists themselves would be the first to admit that they do not *know* of a certainty the substance of the stars, or how or when they came into existence, etc., etc.

Speaking in general terms, we might say that astronomy, like any other subject, has a *what* and a *why* and a *how*, all of which the astronomers try to answer. In recent years the *what* of the subject, the observable facts, has been tremendously expanded. By the use of modern telescopes, radio telescopes, photography, and other advanced means of observation,

scientists have been able to peer deeper and deeper into the heavens. The more they extend their range of vision, the more stars and galaxies of stars they see. The *what* of the universe now visible is marvelous beyond our comprehension.

But of course scientists do not want only to observe, identify and chart what they can see. They do not want to say simply that they see countless pinpoints of light coming from outer space. They go further and attempt to figure out what the stars are composed of, where they came from, and why and how they exist. A continuing quandary arresting much attention is that of the origin of the universe. And sadly, many do not want to acknowledge a Supreme Creator, and so are groping for a

(Continued on page 22)



Angels Are Watching

How large a part do the angels play in our everyday lives? What may they be doing around us, with us, for us, in our behalf?

The hour was late as an elderly preacher bent over his papers, laboring hard to put the last finishing touches on the sermon he would be giving the next morning. In vain his wife sought to persuade him to retire. "Why do you work so hard on your message?" she said. "Only a handful will hear it." The minister looked up, his eyes shining with the pleasure of the thought that possessed him. "You forget, my dear wife," he replied, "how very large my audience may be. Have you counted the angels who will be listening?"

Angels listening. Angels looking. Angels watching. Isn't there a message here for us today? How large a part do the angels play in our everyday lives? What may they be doing around us, with us, for us, in our behalf? Do we realize how very large *our* audience may be?

The angels, their life, their work, their place in the plan of God, is one of the most fascinating topics of Scripture—and one of the most inspiring. Glorious immortal beings, forever beyond the reach of pain or sickness or woe, they live, and live, and live! each one a shining and eternal testimony to the finished glory of God, each one an eternal member of His eternal family. To them belong the ages of eternity. And to think that they, celestial beings, have

an interest in the developing and perfecting of our little planet! They even have an interest in us as individuals, lowly mortal creatures though we be, if we show ourselves worthy of their interest!

"Ministering Spirits"

The author of the book of Hebrews seems to have been profoundly stirred by the thought of the angels and their part in the affairs of men, for again and again he mentions them. His opening statement attests to their noble work as God's ministers in ages past, as they revealed the knowledge of God to men. He writes: "God, who at sundry times and in divers manners spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets"—many of those "divers manners" included the ministering work of the angels.

Then, in the verses that follow, he describes the relationship of the angels to Christ in the new arrangement that shall shortly come into being. In relation to our earth, Christ is favored above them, He being the Son of God and future King; but the angels have their role, and a mighty and significant role it is. "Are they not all ministering spirits, sent forth to minister for them who shall be heirs of salvation?" (Heb. 1:14).

In Hebrews 2 we learn how weighty was the word spoken by angels, how steadfast, how enforced with judgment and justice.

Angels are watching us today, and with just as much concern and interest as they gave to Abel, or Enoch, or Abraham, or Jacob.

In their hands rested the authority of God Himself; in fact, the whole arranging of earth's affairs seems to be under the supervision of the angels, until the government of Christ and His saints is established, "for unto the angels hath he not put in subjection the world to come, whereof we speak" (Heb. 2:5).

Angels Witnessing

The book of Hebrews also pictures the angels as serving in behalf of men and women individually, observing their actions, keeping the record of their lives, and either approving or disapproving of their conduct. They are divine "witnesses" who "witness" or "report" the conduct of men in the presence of God, according to His standards, and who bear testimony to the deeds of men. The author of Hebrews uses a special word for this "witnessing"; it is the Greek *martureo*, and means generally "to witness, to testify, to declare, bear testimony." Having shared in the struggles of men, and being now in a position to see and know all that happens on earth, the angels are ideal witnesses or reporters in our behalf. Hebrews 11:2 speaks the testimony of their reporting: By faith "the elders obtained a good report"—the elders provided the information, the angels did the reporting.

This special type of witnessing is mentioned again in verse 4, "By faith Abel offered unto God a more excellent sacrifice than Cain, by which he obtained witness (literally, "was borne witness to," *martureo*) that he was righteous, God testifying (again, *martureo*) of his gifts." He speaks of it again in verse 5: "By faith Enoch was translated that he should not see death: and was not found, because God had translated him: for before his translation he had this testimony," this same divine confirmation, this same witness from heaven, "that he pleased God." And at the close of the chapter we

learn that all on this honor roll have this same divine witness declaring their faithfulness. We read, "And these all, having obtained a good report"—God's heavenly witnesses testify to their righteousness, for their deeds are recorded, and God will judge every man according to the record of his own deeds (Jer. 17:10).

We of later generations have these same witnesses watching over us, observing *our* ways, keeping *our* records before God: "Therefore, since we also are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses"—just as the people of past ages were witnessed and observed—"let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which clings so closely, and let us run with perseverance the race that is set before us" (Heb. 12:1, RSV).

It is possible that the author may have referred to the faithful enumerated in chapter 11 when he spoke of "witnesses," but it is also possible that he was thinking of the angels. The word he used suggests a present, living witness, "one who remembers, one who has information or knowledge, and can therefore give information concerning or confirming anything"; it is one who "bears testimony from direct knowledge," and who is able to make "an actual declaration of facts." Who could fit more meaningfully into this definition than the angels of God, those who have themselves been through what we now experience, and who are sent "forth to minister for them who shall be heirs of salvation" (Heb. 1:14)? Are not they witnessing our conduct today, and with just as much concern and interest as they gave to Abel, or Enoch, or Abraham, or Jacob? Are they not writing our record from the information we provide, that we also may obtain a "good report"?

Angels are witnessing! Angels are watching! Do we wonder, as we realize this fact, that the writer of Hebrews drew so practical a

Angels are
watching...do
we not long to
perform nobly in their
presence, and so win the
race that is set before us?

conclusion when he thought of these witnesses surrounding us like a cloud? Does it not make us anxious to lay aside every weight and the sin that clings so closely to us? Do we not long to perform nobly in their presence, and so win the race that is set before us?

The author of Hebrews speaks again of these holy beings in chapter 12. Nearer and ever nearer draws the day when we shall be face to face with these immortal witnesses! We shall see them, an innumerable company of them! In the days of Moses, the people saw angels; the mount burned with fire, and the "sight was so terrible [awesome] that Moses said, I exceedingly fear and quake." But greater scenes await us. "Ye are come unto mount Sion, and unto the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, where millions of angels have gathered for the festival" (Heb. 12:21-22, Jerusalem Bible).

Those who have been silent witnesses and unseen listeners shall be *visible* and right here upon earth. Angels, a whole grand retinue of angels, shall escort the glorious King when He returns to earth. "For the Son of man shall come in the glory of his Father with his angels" (Matt. 16:27). And once they arrive, can't we imagine that they will remain awhile? for angels are destined to play a great and wonderful part in the inaugurating of the heavenly system upon earth. No wonder the author of Hebrews was thrilled by the thought of what we are approaching, even "the city of the living God, the

We may be
hardly known
in this world,
and yet be worthy of the
love and concern and
approbation of the
angels of God.

heavenly Jerusalem, and...an innumerable company of angels." No wonder he wrote, with urgent concern, that "we"—he included himself—"we" who live under the eyes of these heavenly witnesses, should "throw off every encumbrance, every sin to which we cling, and run with resolution the race" to the end (Heb. 12:1, NEB). We should throw off our sinful encumbrances, for someday we shall see those who watch over us!

Divine Spectators

The apostle Paul also thought of angels as watching over the affairs of men. Of himself and his co-workers he wrote, "We are like men condemned to death in the arena, a spectacle to the whole universe—angels as well as men" (I Cor. 4:9, NEB). In Paul's day the arena was the place where the gladiators made sport for the populace. The arena was the scene of many a bloody and terrible sight. In the center, at ground level, was the great open space where the

gladiators confronted each other in a veritable death-show. Surrounding this arena were tiers of seats rising in stadium fashion to great heights and seating many thousands of people. There were box seats at the lower level where prominent people and the emperor sat, while the high gallery seats accommodated the ordinary citizens.

Like the gladiators, says Paul, we fight in a great arena before a host of spectators. And who are the spectators? Of course there are men. They are all around us. We are conscious—sometimes *too* conscious—that they are watching us. But we cannot escape the fact that we live and work in public display. This places upon us a singular responsibility. It means that we are constantly an influence upon others. No one lives to himself alone. The world is watching, and the Bible as we display it in real life may be the clearest statement of faith they will ever read. It is living; it is active. The question is, Is it genuine? Is it true? Does our living testimony read as we would like it to read? Is it all that God would have it be? Can other men seeing our "good works" be moved to glorify our Father in heaven?

Human eyes behold us; but that is not all. Paul says we are performers before men *and* angels! Angels are watching! Do we believe it? We naturally think the whole concern of angels is for their own realm, for God and heaven; with hosts of glorified worlds in the immensity of space, why do they cast even a glance in our direction? Yet, the Bible tells us that they do. Some of them are interested, *very* interested in our earth. Perhaps it is because this planet has been committed to their charge; perhaps they had a hand in its creating ages ago; perhaps they have been watching over it through all the ages since; perhaps it is their responsibility to see that some of its sons and

daughters are finally brought to full glory. What if they do give up a few thousand or million years to oversee a special charge? Is it not a glorious privilege? And they lose nothing; there is just as much time remaining to them, for they are as lasting as time itself. Oh,

Wonderful angels!

*who would not be like them,
Sharing the joys that are theirs!*

They are immortal; but they understand beings who are not; they know what it is to be lowly, mortal creatures subject to decay and death, temptation and pain; they know, because they themselves were once mortal. God works according to an eternal pattern: first, that which is earthy; afterward, that which is heavenly (I Cor. 15:47-49).

These divine spectators, great hosts of angels, watch the progress of our world with intense interest. The Bible tells us the very universe awaits with eager anticipation the perfecting and glorifying of our world. And how their eagerness must mount, as the Day draws nearer, nearer. "The whole creation is on tiptoe to see the wonderful sight of the sons of God coming into their own....In the end the whole of created life will be rescued from the tyranny of change and decay and have its share in that magnificent liberty which can only belong to the children of God" (Rom. 8:19-23, Phillips). The angels are watching, watching, eagerly awaiting the day of our triumph. Do we not long to be one of those whose triumph they are awaiting?

Safe In Angel-Keeping

This is the high hope to which we have been called. As the apostle Paul wrote in his Epistle to the Ephesians, these things are revealed that "you may know what is the hope to which he calls you, what the wealth and glory of the share he offers you among his people in their heritage, and how

The angels are
watching,
eagerly awaiting
the day of our triumph.
Do we not long to be
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are awaiting?

vast the resources of his power open to us who trust in him. They are measured by his strength and the might which he exerted in Christ when he raised him from the dead, when he enthroned him at his right hand in the heavenly realms, far above all governments and authority, all power and dominion, and any title of sovereignty that can be named, not only in this age but in the age to come" (Eph. 1:18-21, NEB). Here is power that can lift us to the level of the angels—if we prove worthy.

It was written of Jesus that during His mortal career He was "seen of angels" (I Tim. 3:16). This is the normal circumstance of every aspiring son or daughter of God. We may be hardly known in this world, and yet be worthy of the love and concern and approbation of the angels of God. If we are making ourselves heirs of salvation, if we are called of God and

striving to make that calling and election sure, God sends His angels to watch over us and to arrange circumstances that we may finally be brought to full perfection. "He shall give his angels charge over thee, to keep thee in all thy ways" (Ps. 91:11). Isn't this a wonderful assurance—and consider that it comes from the great God of heaven!

He has placed us in the charge of His angels; now, for nearly six thousand years, they have been watching over those who are to be heirs of salvation. They have observed firsthand the building of God's heavenly family upon earth; they have watched, and still watch; they miss nothing. Even now they see "the complex wisdom of God's plan being worked out through the Church" (Eph. 3:10, Phillips). They watch; and at the precise moment, when they are needed, they intervene. Thus it has ever been.

Angels are destined to play a great and wonderful part in the inaugurating of the heavenly system upon earth.

When Enoch was earning his fine testimony that "he pleased God," an angel was watching, keeping the good record; and when the day came that he was to be translated to some other world—perhaps at the request of the recording angel—we can be sure angels were on hand to carry him away. The same angel may have been watching when Abraham was leading his son up Mount Moriah, placing him upon the altar, and preparing to slay him in obedi-

Let Us Pray...

Almighty and eternal God, Creator of the universe and Father of our spirits, we worship Thee. Far from us Thou art, but by the insensitiveness of our own evil hearts we too often keep Thee distant. Grant to us in this hour of opportunity the grace of receptiveness, that into hospitable souls we may receive Thee, Thou Spirit of goodness and truth. Cross the inner thresholds of our hearts, lay hold upon our faith, steady our faltering steps, and with such inner refreshment send us out to be good soldiers for Thee, that we may be equal to all the demands that shall be made upon us. May our human efforts bulwarked by Thy divine strength bear fruit that shall meet with Thy approval and give us assurance when we shall stand before the Judgment seat of Christ.

Father, we recognize Thee as the Source of all knowledge and wisdom. With the Psalmist we marvel at Thy ability to know what is going on in each of our hearts. Thou dost continually search and know us.

Thou knowest our downsitings and our uprising, Thou understandest our thoughts afar off. There is not a word in our tongue but Thou, Lord, knowest it altogether. Even the darkness cannot hide us from Thine all-seeing eye. The thoughts that we try hardest to conceal and the motives that we the most diligently try to hide are naked and open to Thee, our all-seeing God.

Cognizant of Thy superior plan for the surveillance of Thy worshipers, may we recognize the futility of trying to hide anything from Thee or of making ourselves believe we are better than Thou knowest us to be. We cannot hide from Thee, and we cannot hide from the all-seeing eyes of the recording angels who are the unseen guests at every meal, the silent listeners to our every conversation. They are keeping a faithful record of all that we do, we cannot hide from them.

May we always remember that Thine eyes are open upon all the ways of the sons of men, to give every one according to his ways, according to the fruit of his doings.

We ask it in the name of Him who grew in wisdom and stature, suffered the cross, and lives and reigns over the hearts and lives who are surrendered wholly to Thee, even Jesus Christ who shall one Day reign as King over the entire earth. Amen.

Angels watch;
and at the
precise moment
they are needed,
they intervene.

ence to the divine command. An angel was watching, for at the precise moment when Abraham lifted his knife to kill, the angel spoke those gracious words of deliverance: "Abraham, Abraham, ... lay not thine hand upon the lad, neither do thou any thing unto him: for now I know that thou fearest God, seeing thou hast not withheld thy son, thine only son from me" (Gen. 22:11-12).

Angels were watching while the children of Israel were suffering in Egyptian bondage, for when the time was right, "there appeared to [Moses] in the wilderness of mount

Sina an angel of the Lord in a flame of fire in a bush," appointing him to deliver the Israelites from Egypt (Acts 7:30-31).

The law for the governing of the Israelite nation was given by "the disposition of angels" (Acts 7:53). In fact, we read that "ten thousands of saints" came down upon Mount Sinai for the occasion, and "saints" is a term for those "fully dedicated to God," and often used of the glorified members of God's family.

Through forty years of wandering in the wilderness, angels were watching, guiding, leading, a "pillar of fire" by night and a "cloud" by day. Often they dealt directly with Moses and Aaron, and it was very possibly their presence which filled the tabernacle with "the glory of the Lord." When Moses died, angels were there to perform honorary funeral rites in his behalf (Deut. 34:5-6).

When King David sinned in numbering Israel and the Lord sent

punishment, angels were watching, for at the proper time the plague was stayed by the angel (II Sam. 24:1-16).

When the Syrians seemed to have surrounded Elisha and his servant, angels were watching. The servant, young and inexperienced in the ways of God, cried out in fear, "Alas! master, how shall we do?" Elisha answered in full confidence, "Fear not: for they that be with us are more than they that be with them." Whether Elisha could see the divine guardians as he spoke, we do not know, but watching angels there were, thousands of them; for when the Lord opened the eyes of the young man, he saw "the mountain was full of horses and chariots of fire" (II Kings 6:16-17); and "the chariots of God are twenty thousand, even thousands of angels" (Ps. 68:17).

Wherever there were people of God—in Israel, in Egypt, in Babylon—angels were watching. Visible or invisible, they were there.

Careful!

Yes, careful! angels are watching. What do they see? Do they recognize us as children of God, men and women who shall one day be welcomed into their family? Are we the kind of persons they can look forward to living with through all eternity?

Careful! angels are watching. Do they smile with approval as they see us in our homes, with our family, our friends? Are we always kind, helpful, and considerate? Are we the type of persons they would choose as their eternal companions?

Do they see among us that godly love which they feel among themselves, as we encourage one another and bear each other's burdens? Or do we tend to be challenging, difficult and superior, what Paul called "carnal"?

Careful! angels are watching. What do they think as they see us playing with a temptation we vowed long ago to leave alone? What do they think as they see us sitting idle, letting our thoughts run where they will when we could be meditating? What do they think of our half-hearted efforts when they hear us

professing to seek the tremendous reward they now enjoy? What do they think of our weak, vacillating faith when they are actual inheritors of the fullness of divine blessing?

Careful! angels are watching. They see, they know. They see what we do, they know what we can do. When we stumble—and make excuses for ourselves—they know. They know how much better we could have done. They know our weaknesses, true; but they also know how, with a little diligence we could transform those weak-

In the pagan city of Babylon, Daniel's three companions appeared to stand alone against the King's command; but when they were cast into the fiery furnace, a "fourth" person was with them—visible—and his likeness was "like the son of God." The angel was with them. Daniel himself was richly blessed by watching angels—blessed with deliverance, protection, and marvelous insights into coming events.

Jesus was tempted forty days in the wilderness. He seemed to be battling alone, and the struggle was intense; but when He had proven His power and determination to resist, "angels came and ministered unto him." Angels had been watching.

We do not know how many times during His ministry Jesus was able to see or converse with angels, but we know they were watching. In the Garden of Gethsemane, on the night of His betrayal, when "being in agony he prayed more

earnestly: and his sweat was as it were great drops of blood falling down to the ground," when He struck the final blow of self-surrender, saying, "Not my will, but thine be done," angels were watching. They were right there with Him, for we read that just then "there appeared an angel unto him from heaven, strengthening him" (Luke 22:42-44).

On the morning of the resurrection, angels were watching, for "the angel of the Lord descended from heaven and came and rolled back the stone from the door." Angels were watching the day Jesus led His disciples out of Bethany, for at the proper time they made themselves known and bore Him majestically to heaven (Luke 24:50-51). As Jesus disappeared with them into the azure blue, two other angels "stood by, in white apparel" to assure the wondering disciples that as He went away, so He would return (Acts 1:9-11).

Angels were watching and di-

recting during the early days of the Church, and intervening as the need arose. For example, an angel dispatched Philip to "go toward the south unto the way that goeth down from Jerusalem unto Gaza"—which he did, and met the Ethiopian eunuch who was seeking understanding (Acts 8:25-27). How many an honest heart might have been missed through the ages, had not the angels of God been watching.

An angel came into the house of Cornelius, and directed him to the place where he could find a man who could teach him the will of God (Acts 10). On two different occasions, an angel appeared to deliver Peter from prison. While Paul and all on board the ship were being tossed by the vengeance of the storm, angels were watching, for as they came near to giving up hope, Paul rose up and declared, "There stood by me this night the angel of God, whose I

(Continued on page 26)

nesses into mighty spiritual strengths. They know.

Angels are watching. Do they see us living up to our best, daily outdoing ourselves in spiritual advancement? Or do they shake their heads in dismay as they see us let priceless opportunities slip by unclaimed?

What do we love and seek, deep in our heart of hearts? The angels know; do we? What are we concerned about? The world is filled with people who have enthusiasm for sports, or hobbies, or business, or politics. What about *us*? Is ours a deep and constant enthusiasm for the things that matter most?

Oh, how careful we should be, as we conduct ourselves in the presence of the angels of God. They are eager to see us forgive the brother who has wronged us, and to forget the wrong. And when we ourselves are in the wrong, they would have

us turn squarely around, admit it, and do better. Can't we do it?

We have a duty to fulfill. We put it off, waiting, waiting for a more convenient season. But, careful! Angels are watching. They would have us go and do it—now! How can we risk the dangers of delay?

The angels of God delivered Lot and his family from the doomed city. They took them by the hand and hastened them away. This seems to have been one of their special duties through the ages—"heavenly expeditors," we might call them. Whenever they appeared, their message was one of urgency. "Hasten!" or "Go quickly!" or "Escape." They did not speak for *their* benefit, but for the fulfilling of their duty to earthborns. There is something passive and bland about us mortals; we seem so hard to impress with the imminence of danger. The angels see; they know how critical is the

time. No time for loitering, or indecision, or weak and faltering purpose; no time for toying with a temptation or wasting energy in a half-hearted effort.

Even today the angels of God may have the same words upon their lips. "Hasten! Why are you so slow to believe and do?" They would have us hasten our escape from the tempest that is approaching. Are we cooperating with them? Do we heed their divine message?

Always angels were interested in those who were devoted to God. Is there such a devotion in your life and mine, such as will evoke the angel's interest in *our* lives? Heaven draws near the souls of the consecrated; no godly desire, or love for holiness, or longing for goodness, or struggle for purity will ever go unrecognized or unrecorded—because *angels are watching!*

MM

The Bible and Astronomy

(Continued from page 15)

theory to explain the vast creation—without a Creator!

Astronomers build their science by relating what they know from studying our earth to what they see with their telescopes, assuming that like substances produce like effects, and that like effects are produced by like substances or processes. This may be true, partly true, or not true at all. Our knowledge of worlds so far removed from us must be limited at best.

When we think about the theories of the astronomers, which they state so confidently, we must realize the factors against them:

1) *Distance*. The stars lie at distances so great that the light that leaves them this instant reaches our eye or our telescope anywhere from four years from now to ten thousand million years from now (and light travels at a rate of six trillion miles every year).

One scientist during the past year, acclaiming the discovery of a "new galaxy," said that observing this galaxy was like studying the light emitted by a 40-watt bulb at a distance of 600,000 miles!

2) *Mortality*. The scientists themselves have such short life spans that observing changes or patterns in the heavens over a long period of time is impossible. And seeing any star or group of stars firsthand by any means known to us today is out of the question—the very nearest star, using present rockets for transportation, is nearly 100,000 years away!

3) *Knowledge*. A few astronomers acknowledge God, but the majority prefer to be independent of any religious beliefs and figure out all the why's and how's without accepting what the great Creator has revealed about them. By so doing they are immediately limiting their views to what they themselves can imagine; and some of

their conclusions, if we may judge, seem almost too childish to take seriously. If they would take what God has revealed about His creation, His purposes, and His overall plan, and fit what they know about the heavens into that framework, they would get a totally different picture of what is happening in the heavens.

We choose to stop with observing the *what* of the creation, and turn to the knowledge of God as revealed in His Word for our answers to *why* and *when* and *how*.

We are thrilled by the now visible handiwork of our Great Creator. We are awed by the magnitude of His purpose, and deeply grateful that He has made it possible for us to "see" a tiny corner of this vastness. But we choose to leave the unknowns with Him, part of the "secret things" not yet revealed, and concentrate on the work He has assigned to us, preparing ourselves that we may have part in the scenes soon to be enacted on our Earth.

For example, scientists observe differences in the appearance of the various stars. Different stars appear to be different colors. Now scientists know that burning gases in our environment produce various colors; and when they see these same colors in the stars, they conclude that the same burning gas out there produces the same color of light. The same is true of their understanding of the

lifecycle. Everything we are acquainted with has a lifecycle; hence, scientists conclude that the heavenly bodies are passing through a lifecycle.

Some of their conclusions may be right to some extent. We are not told how worlds are created, or through what stages of development they pass.

The Bible does not tell us all we would like to know about the heavens and the visible creation, but of a few facts we may be sure:

God is the supreme Creator. He "made the heavens, with all their host; the earth, and all things that are therein" (Neh. 9:6).

God has a whole family in heaven, as well as in earth. "For this cause I bow my knees unto the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, of whom the whole family in heaven and earth is named" (Eph. 3:14-15).

God's will is "done...in heaven" (Matt. 6:10)—which means that living beings are *doing* His will in heaven now.

From eternity past God has had beings on whom He has been bestowing His mercy. "But the mercy of the Lord is from everlasting to everlasting upon them that fear him, and his righteousness unto children's children; to such as keep his covenant" (Ps. 103:17-18). A God who has mercy from "everlasting to everlasting" has had *someone* on whom to bestow that mercy from "everlasting."

God's heavenly beings travel among different worlds in God's vast creation, even between heavenly worlds and our earth. "And the angel answering said unto him [Zacharias], I am Gabriel, that stand in the presence of God; and am sent to speak unto thee," (Luke 1:19). The angel Gabriel had come from the "presence of God"—from the real abode of real beings, where dwells the great Creator Himself.

For our answers
to **WHY** and
WHEN and
HOW of the Creation
we turn not to science
but to the Creator
and His knowledge, as
revealed in His Word.

The Bible contains almost three hundred direct references to angels, real living beings who live somewhere in God's limitless creation. And from what the Bible says about these heavenly beings, we may safely conclude that there are many, many of them inhabiting many, many worlds. Note these statements about the angels:

"The chariots of God are twenty thousand, even thousands of angels: the Lord is among them" (Ps. 68:17).

"A fiery stream issued and came forth from before him: thousand thousands ministered unto him" (Dan. 7:10), or as translated in the Moffatt Bible, "Millions of angels were at his service."

"Ye are come...unto the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to an innumerable company of angels" (Heb. 12:22), or "to countless hosts of angels," "gathered thousands upon thousands," "myriads," "countless multitudes of angels" (other versions).

"Are not the angels all spirits in service, whom he sends on his errands for the good of those who are destined to possess salvation?" (Heb. 1:14, Am. Trans.).

God's creation is not limited to this small planet, nor are His living beings limited to those we see here. We are only one small part of His "manifold wisdom," according to His "eternal purpose" (Ps. 104:24; Eph. 3:10-11).

"Some astronomers assume that because the stars are burning gas, they will eventually burn themselves out. They say the same about our sun, that it will eventually become dark and the earth will become a huge chunk of ice, and life will become extinct. Is this possible?"

Here again the scientists are limited to conclusions they can draw using the information they have been able to put together. They are not familiar with anything that can give off such vast

amounts of light unless it be burning. Thus, when they see an object radiating light, they conclude there must be something "burning" to produce that light.

If they would consult the Bible, they would learn that immortal beings radiate light.

"And they that be wise shall shine as the brightness of the firmament; and they that turn many to righteousness as the stars for ever and ever" (Dan. 12:3). The righteous shall shine "as the stars for ever and ever."

"Then shall the righteous shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father" (Matt. 13:43).

When Jesus appeared to Paul on the Damascus Road, there was "light from heaven" which exceeded the brightness of the noon-day sun (Acts 9:3; 22:6; 26:13).

When the angels appeared to the shepherds at the time Jesus was born, the "glory of the Lord shone round about them" (Luke 2:9), causing them to be afraid.

When the Kingdom has been established and God's angels are openly active on earth, and the saints have been glorified, it is written that "the sun shall be no more thy light by day; neither for brightness shall the moon give light unto thee: but the Lord shall be unto thee an everlasting light, and thy God thy glory" (Isa. 60:19). So bright will be the divine light that, as the Revelator described it, "the city had no need of the sun, neither of the moon, to shine in it: for the glory of God did lighten it,...And the nations of them which are saved shall walk in the light of it:...for there shall be no night there" (Rev. 21:23-25).

God is not dependent on physical combustion to produce light.

As far as the possibility of the sun's burning itself out and the earth's freezing up, we have no fear. The Bible compares the reign of Christ to the duration of the sun and the moon, and many passages of Scripture state that His kingdom will be "everlasting" (Ps.

The "heaven of heavens, with all their host" are sure evidence of life beyond our little sphere!

72:5, 17; Luke 1:32-33; Dan. 7:27). As for the earth, it, too, "abideth for ever" (Eccl. 1:4). No if's, until's or wherefore's, but simply "the earth abideth for ever."

"The astronomers seem to assume that life comes about naturally when conditions are just right. They say that is why we have life on earth. What do you think?"

It seems impossible that any thinking person could honestly believe life in all its complex and varied forms just "happened" or evolved. Scientists themselves have proven that life cannot come from non-life. There is absolutely no evidence that inanimate objects ever become animate, or "alive" of themselves.

The Bible tells us plainly that all life originates with the Creator, God. Nehemiah long ago stated this fact when he said: "Thou, even thou, art Lord alone; thou hast made heaven, the heaven of heavens, with all their host, the earth, and all things that are therein, the seas, and all that is therein, and thou preservest them all; and the host of heaven worshipeth thee" (Neh. 9:6).

"The heaven of heavens, with all their host"—certainly there is life beyond our little sphere. There is life elsewhere in the universe, and one Almighty God sustains it all.

MM

Opportunities Unlimited

The Glory of God's Second Chance

Part 5: The Story of Stephen

*From unpromising and even hopeless beginnings, men have risen and may yet rise to the heights of character and achievement, by the power of faith and the help of the Eternal.
"Better is the end of a thing than the beginning thereof" (Eccl. 7:8).*

Introduction

Of the early life of Stephen, the first Christian martyr, we know nothing at all. We are certain that he possessed a good and honest heart, and the possibilities of greatness, but there must have been at some point in his life an awakening and a change.

What we know of him proves that he was willing to listen and learn. And once anyone hears and understands the Truth of the Eternal, his thinking can never be the same again. Stephen's never was. It takes character to listen to evidence that goes against our established beliefs. Stephen had that character.

No one is righteous in his natural condition. The best qualities are often deeply buried under an accretion of undesirable characteristics. In some cases, the best in one's nature may become evil by misdirection, as in the case of Saul of Tarsus.

Stephen's Greek name and his familiarity with Jewish lore indicate that he was a Hellenistic Jew, probably well educated. We think of him as a young man, but of this there is no evidence.

He may or may not have seen Jesus in the flesh. Our record of him begins with his appointment to the board of deacons in the Jerusalem church, a position which he speedily outgrew.

In the following scene we picture him as a visitor to Judea in the days of John the Baptist's ministry a cynical, scoffing young sophisticate having no awareness of the tremendous forces latent within him ready

to respond to the divine touch. He is surrounded by congenial company, and all in all they are finding the "revival" amusing.

Scene 1: Hearing and Learning

Characters:

Stephen young Greek from Antioch, interested in Judaism
Alexander friend of Stephen
Gershom a local Jew
Justus a small boy
John's Voice (off-stage)

Setting:

A group of people on the fringes of the crowd at the Jordan, where John is baptizing. John's voice is heard in the distance, rising and falling.

Voice: Repent, for the majesty of the heavens has approached!

Stephen: [sneering] Big talk. Who does he think he is—the herald of a king?

Alexander: I've seen some heralds, but never one that looked like that [laughs].

Stephen: He looks like a trip to the barber shop and the tailor would do him a world of good. Those clothes! that hair! that beard!

Alexander: And that accent. He's from the country all right!

Gershom: That's from Galilee. All kinds of queer things come out of Galilee.

Stephen: And this crowd of rustics.

Gershom: Some important people here, too, Stephen. Look at those Pharisees and Sadducees over there. Our solid citizens, you know, even if most of them are hypocrites. Look—he's talking to them.

Voice: O generation of vipers, who hath warned you to flee from the wrath to come? Bring forth fruits answerable to amendment of life [voice trails off].

Stephen: Well, I admire his courage, if not his costume. Sounds like Elijah, or one of the old prophets. But where does he get his authority?

Gershom: I don't know. Probably from the same place Elijah got his.

Alexander: But why does he baptize?

Gershom: I don't know that either. Moses never commanded it, that I ever heard of. Of course, I don't claim to be religious—

Stephen: Nothing like this in Antioch where we come from. Very strange. Very unusual. Very interesting.

Gershom: Well, I'll tell you, I've lived here all my life, and I know these people better than you do. About every so often we get ideas about a Messiah, but nothing ever comes of it. And these reformers with their moral uplift come and make a big stir for a while, just like this, and then they're gone without much trace. It's all right, I suppose, but—

Stephen: But what is he trying to do—establish a following, or found a sect of his own?

Gershom: I wouldn't know.

Alexander: [with irony] If he does, Stephen here ought to be a good candidate for him—a serious young man, very capable, very eloquent, very scholarly, very determined, afraid of nothing—once he starts a thing he always sees it through. Ready to join up, Stephen?

Stephen: Don't make me laugh. I'm just here for a holiday—to get something to write about to the folks in Antioch—these queer customs [claps Gershom on shoulder].

Gershom: Oh, we're queer, all right. But, when you come down to it, Judaism is a good, rugged, tough old religion. It will outlast a hundred movements like this. Our father Abraham, you know—

Stephen: Listen!

Voice: And begin not to say within yourselves, We have Abraham to our father: for I say unto you, that God is able of these stones to raise up

children unto Abraham. And now also the axe is laid unto the root of the trees: Every tree therefore which bringeth not forth good fruit is hewn down, and cast into the fire. He who has two coats, let him share with him....[fading out].

Stephen: Now that doesn't sound too bad, does it. It's logical. Your argument is gone before you start, Gershom.

Alexander: And so are we. Come on, I've heard enough. Let's go.

Gershom: Me, too.

Stephen: Just a minute, fellows. I want to hear him finish this answer.

Gershom: What! to that slimy publican?

Alexander: Come on, Stephen, before he gets you. That water's cold.

Gershom: And muddy.

Stephen: Run along if you are in a hurry. I'll be with you in a minute.

[They leave and Justus drifts in. Meanwhile the Voice continues.]

Voice: I indeed baptize you with water, but one mightier than I cometh, the latchet of whose shoes I am not worthy to unloose: he shall baptize you with the Holy Spirit and with fire. Whose fan is in his hand, and he will thoroughly purge his floor and will gather the wheat into his garner; but the chaff he will burn up with unquenchable fire.

Stephen: Say, boy, do you know where this preacher lives?

Justus: No, sir, I don't.

Stephen: Well, here's a penny for you to find out, and when you come back I'll give you another, if you've found out. I'll be right here. Hurry, now!
[Exit Justus]

Scene 2: Faithful Unto Death

Narrator:

Stephen, having become a staunch disciple of the risen Christ, was selected as one of "the seven" first deacons, appointed to distribute food and other necessities to the poor of the growing Christian community in Jerusalem, in order to give the apostles more time for the spiritual activities of their ministry. But "the seven" were apparently expected not only to "serve tables" but to teach and preach, as Stephen did in the synagogues. Members of the Hellenistic group within the synagogue of the Libertines, and others who were jealous of Stephen's wisdom and consecrated spirit, have trumped up a charge that he was speaking blasphemously against Moses, stirred up the Jewish elders, and had him hailed before the Sanhedrin. There false witnesses have accused him of saying that Jesus

would destroy the holy place of Jerusalem "and change the customs which Moses...delivered."

Stephen's opponents expressed exactly what the new Christian era was already bringing to pass. He makes no apology for his faith but with dauntless spirit dramatically sings his defense. (Tune: Majestic Sweetness)

Ye stiff necked and uncircumcised
In heart, in heart and ears;
Ye do resist the words of Truth
As all your fathers did,
As all your fathers did.

(The crowd murmurs, stopping their ears)

Which of the prophets of the Lord
Have not your fathers slain?
E'en those who showed the coming of
The Just One to the earth,
And Him ye have betrayed.

(The crowd becomes more threatening, gnashing their teeth at him, while Stephen, with radiant countenance and rapt spirit sings on).

Behold, I see the heavens open,
And lo, the Son of man
Is standing on the right hand of
The God of earth and heav'n,
On the right hand of God.

(Shouting loudly, enraged, the mob rushes at him in a body. Above the tumult and pelting stones, Stephen's voice rings in prayerful petition. Tune: In the Hour of Trial.)

In the hour of trial, Father strengthen me,
Lest by base denial I depart from Thee.
When Thou seest me waver, with Thy Truth recall,
Nor from Thy dear favor suffer me to fall.

Father, blessed Father, do not lay this sin
To their charge, lest someone fail the crown to win
And to Thee, Lord, Jesus, here on bended knees,
This I ask, my spirit wouldst Thou now receive.
Amen.

(The witnesses place their garments at the feet of a young man who is standing by, and drag Stephen out).

.....

Stephen has been called the first martyr. Others had died before him for the cause of God and right, but he was the first to die for the cause after Jesus was martyred. Jesus taught the same eternal truths which all the prophets understood and taught—and died for.

Stephen's death points up an important thing about character. It is inflexible where principle is at stake. Once we are so convinced of God's law of truth that we would die rather than deny it by word or act, other difficult things in life will be easier for us. MM

(Next issue: The Story of John)

Angels Are Watching

(Continued from page 21)

am, and whom I serve" (Acts 27:23). They were not at the mercy of the elements; angels were watching.

Angels Still Watch

All during the day of salvation, wherever there were loyal servants of God, there were angels, watching, ministering. Never did they forsake God's earthly children; never will they. And we today can qualify for their heavenly services as fully as the people of God in any other age—we can, if we will. Is not this the divine plan? Are they not indeed "ministering spirits, sent forth to minister for them who shall be heirs of salvation?" (Heb. 1:14). Is not the angel of the Lord encamping "round about them that fear him," to deliver them? (Ps. 34:7). These are divine promises, and we should notice that they are without time limit. The only condition is that we "fear God."

Angels have watched, they do watch, and they evermore shall watch over those who fear God. If we are with God, they are with us. They are with us this very moment, if we are doing our part to become heirs of salvation. From near or from far, they watch, and shall continue to until the last mortal that shall be crowned has received the full blessing of heaven and is made equal to the angels.

How thankful we should be for this rich, heaven-sent promise. If we can qualify as those who "fear God," we can know that angels are watching out for our safety today. They are guiding, directing, protecting, arranging circumstances so that we may have all the trials and testings we need, properly balanced with sufficient power to endure, to perfect in us the character-likeness of Christ. We could not do it alone; we need the help of God's ministering angels.

But angels do more than minister. As we mentioned earlier, they also watch and record. They are our living witnesses; even this very minute they are watching, recording. They read our thoughts; they listen to our words, they probe our motives. Angels are watching, watching, watching, every moment of every day. And what, oh, what do they see as they observe us—you and me? What is their opinion of us?

Angels see; angels know. If only we could tune our ears to

...catch the music of the spheres,
And in that holy moment of surprise
Pick up God's program from the midnight
skies!

If only we, down here in the arena of life, could look up and see the grandstands filled with these divine spectators, all there cheering for us! Wouldn't we run the faster? Wouldn't we press the harder?

Someday we shall see them. Someday we shall hear them. And what then? Shall ours be the joy supreme of talking with the angel who watched us safely through?

This is no flight of fancy. These things are real; they are among the promises of God who shall not let fail a single word of all that He has spoken.

Let us make it our goal, whatever we do, wherever we go, whoever we are with, to remember our duty to the God we serve. Again and again let us remind ourselves to be CAREFUL, for ANGELS ARE WATCHING! MM

Obituary

Percy Manktelow

As this issue goes to press (December 9), we have just received word of the death of Percy Manktelow, an aged member.

Born in Kent, England, Brother Manktelow relocated permanently to the United States in 1921. His acquaintance with the Megiddo Church dates back to the early 1930's, when he began attending our church with his family.

Brother Manktelow is survived by his two children, Robert Manktelow, of Rochester, and Joyce Manktelow, of North Chili, New York, both of our Rochester Congregation.

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"By his faith he is speaking to us still"—Heb. 11 : 4, Moffatt.

Words for the Living

Excerpts from the sermons, talks and writings of Rev. L. T. Nichols (1844-1912).

Keep in the way, keep on the right side. I would rather go to an extreme in the right, than to risk getting on the wrong side.



See how an engineer will care for his engine. Though already bright as a dollar, he polishes it again. Isn't it better? for if he allows a speck of dust on it, he might get his walking papers.

Better to go too far than not far enough.



With the evidence we have of the truthfulness of God's Word, it seems it would make us like a steam engine, ready to plow through anything.



We can plainly see the way the world is going, but it seems quite another thing to see the way we are going. It is quite easy to see others, but so difficult to see our own faults. But we must be more interested in our own failings than in anyone else's.



Why climb up the dark side of a mountain, where you cannot see the chasms or pitfalls, when you can get on the bright sunny side?

We are right down here in the end of time. The first, second, third, fourth, fifth, sixth, seventh, eighth, ninth, and tenth hours have all passed. We are in the eleventh hour, in the cool of the day. Soon the day will end. Can we not work for God in the little time that is left?

How wonderful the goodness of God, that even down here He will give us time to get ourselves ready, that we may be saved.



The more we live according to God's truth, the better we like to, and the more happiness we will get.



You should take a review every night. Say to yourself, "Have I done any better today? Did I speak a little cross to this one? Can I do better tomorrow?"



If the wonderful reward of endless rest and quietude in the grand summerland of love, to evermore partake of the endless beatitudes of glory is not worth our entire time to be spent doing the commandments, then we are not worthy of it.

What Do You See?

Set before the average man or woman some tangible and transient reward that really captivates the heart—whether a fine home, the assurance of financial security, or the prospect of renown and high achievement—and that person will work incessantly to obtain it. Set before him the Christian's prospect of heirship in the world to come and he becomes mired in a million minor interests.

What is the difference? Just this: The first sees the reward in terms of earthly gain, and though fire might destroy, physical handicap might prevent his realizing it, or death might cancel his efforts and extinguish his hope, yet he regards these hazards as unlikely (or disregards them entirely). On the other hand, the Christian must exercise faith to see his reward, and though it is a million times more certain than the paltry rewards of the present, still if his eye of faith is weak, his future outlook is certain to be dim, and his efforts to obtain it spasmodic at best.

But not always. There *are* Christians—though they are rare—with eyes of faith so strong that they can penetrate the misty veil of time and see clearly the rewards of eternity. Take Moses, for example. Though living in the midst of the splendors and luxuries of Egypt, with perhaps only a step between him and the throne, yet he endured “as seeing him who is invisible.” Here was faith

at its best. The *invisible* future was clearer to his sight than the *visible* present. Looking ahead, he saw the day when Egypt's splendor and that of a thousand kingdoms which followed it would fade and crumble and be forgotten, and upon their ruins should be erected the eternal Kingdom of God. Even more than this, he visualized himself an immortal ruler in that New Order. And, as though seeing the invisible, he rejected Egypt's offers as far too small, unworthy of his effort.

Then there was Paul, with visual acuity equal to that of Moses. The beatings, the stonings, the imprisonments, all forms of torture inflicted by his persecutors, lost half their effect upon him, so completely captivated was he by his vision of the eternal reward. In triumph he exclaimed, “Our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory;...for the things which are seen are temporal; but the things which are not seen are eternal” (II Cor. 4:17-18). His eye of faith was keen and well focused.

This same incentive which had power to hold steadfast the faith and vision of these men of God has been set before us. Does it hold the same appeal to us?

What do you see: the trivial rewards of Egypt or the “far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory”?

MM