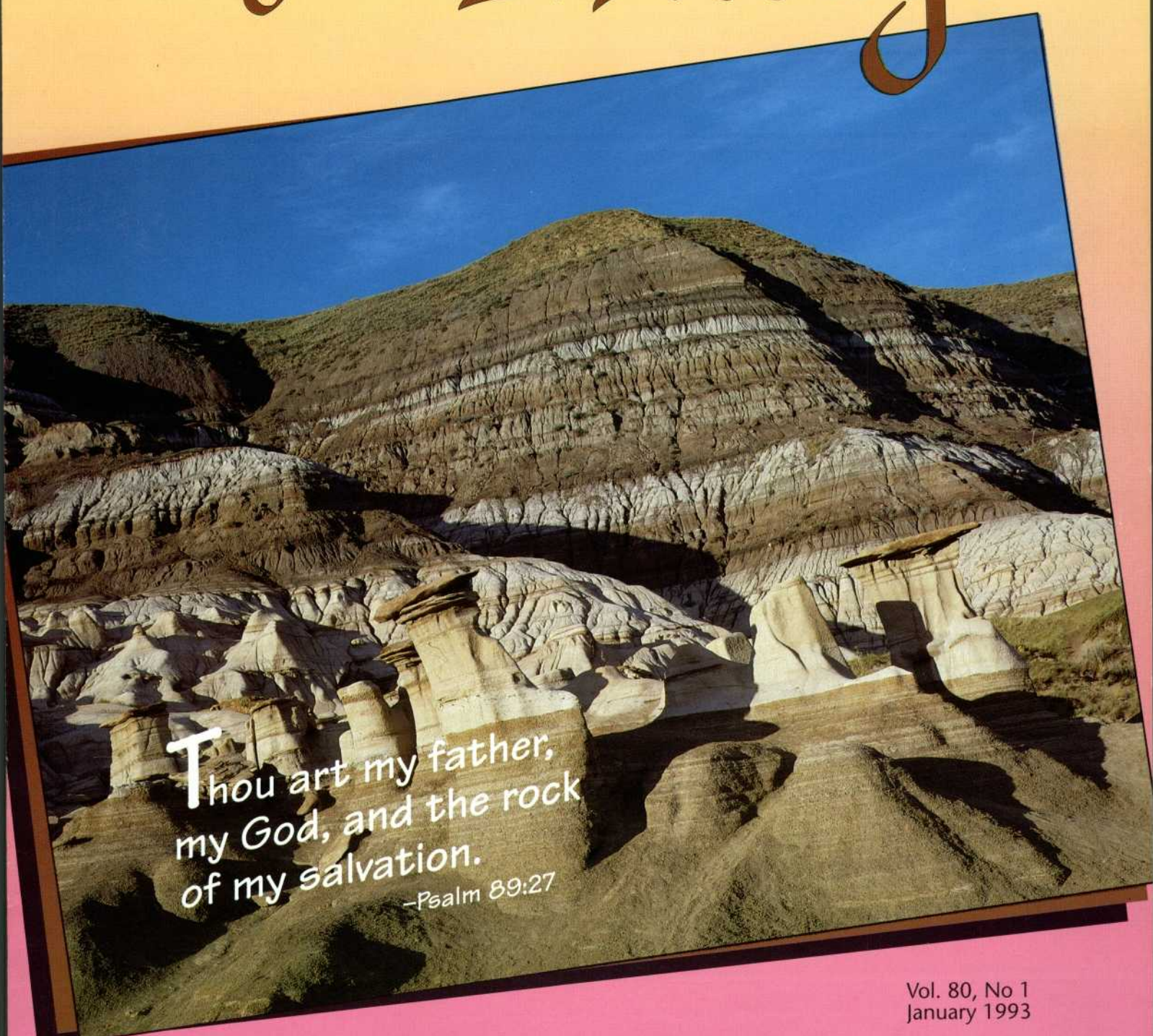


# Megiddo Message



Thou art my father,  
my God, and the rock  
of my salvation.

—Psalm 89:27

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# More and More Feeling

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eelings are strange things. They can lift us to the heights, or they can pierce our consciousness as with a dart, leaving the poison of bitterness behind.

Yet who would want to be without feeling? In the world of medicine, the diseases most feared are those which give no sense of pain until the disease has advanced so far that it is beyond cure.

The apostle Paul described those who are "past feeling" as spiritually hopeless individuals, failures by their own decree, "through their deliberate ignorance of mind and sheer hardness of heart" (Eph. 4:19, Phillips). They were not inherently worse than others, but they cut themselves off from help by their lack of feeling. Sin did not cause any pain; holiness did not give any pleasure; the goals of the higher life did not stir any longings in their breast. The gospel message, with its warm and tender appeals, left them utterly cold and untouched. There was neither vexation nor joy, neither hatred nor love. There was simply no response, no feeling.

Developing and maintaining a proper sensitivity toward God and holiness is a vital part of our task as aspiring Christians. And it is no haphazard process. Like every other area of our Christian growth, our sensitivity must be developed, and under the specific direction of our will. We must consciously submit ourselves to the law of God. If the law says yes, "yes" must be our feeling and desire. If the law says no, that "no" must kill any desire or affection we may have felt toward that indulgence. The price of opposing the law of God just isn't worth it.

The developing of a proper sensitivity is not merely desirable—it is commanded. In fact, our entire spiritual growth will be in direct proportion to our spiritual awareness.

Said the great Apostle, "They that are after the flesh do mind the things of the flesh; but they that are after the Spirit the things of the Spirit. For to be carnally minded is death; but to be spiritually minded is life and peace" (Rom. 8:5-6). Before there can be rapid spiritual progress, there must be a keen sensitivity to the things of the Spirit, a cutting awareness of the presence of sin, and a deep hatred of all that God calls evil.

How do we develop this special sensitivity? The author of Hebrews advises exercise, a very special type of exercise. We must have our senses "exercised to discern both good and evil" (Heb. 5:14). The very term exercise implies repeated and voluntary effort, pondering each situation and comparing it carefully with the law of God. Is it good? Is it evil? Is it somewhere between? Is it even slightly questionable? The more we practice this exercise, the more readily we will be able to judge, or "discern both good and evil."

The apostle Paul had yet another term for this special discernment in his letter to the Philippians. He set up this sensitivity as a benchmark of spiritual progress: "My prayer is that your love for each other may increase more and more and never stop improving your knowledge and deepening your perception so that you can always recognize what is best. This will help you to become pure and blameless, and prepare you for the day of Christ" (Phil. 1:9-10, JB). A "deepening perception" is not an automatic result of deciding to follow Christ and His law of life. It is a capability which comes from discipline and training, from consistent and daily exercise, changing our tastes, becoming sensitive to what God calls good. For we do not naturally possess this true discrimination, this ability to recognize what is really the best. *(Continued on page 27)*



## 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 and sustainer of the earth, the world, the universes, and all life, in whom we "live, and move, and have our being."
- in the Bible as our only source of true knowledge about God and His purposes and plans for His creation and for the salvation of humankind.
- in Jesus Christ, the Son of God and our Perfect Example, who was conceived of the Holy Spirit and born of a virgin; who ministered among His brethren, was crucified, resurrected, and 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.
- in the Holy Spirit, the openly manifest power of God, which God bestowed at various times and in various ways to reveal His knowledge to humankind, to support His spokesmen, to confirm His utterances, and to demonstrate His supreme power and authority.
- in life as the gift of God, and in our sacred responsibility to use it for God and His coming Kingdom.
- in humankind as providing the raw material from which shall be selected and developed a superior, God-honoring people upon whom God will bestow the blessings of immortal life in His soon-coming Kingdom.
- in ourselves as capable of applying in our own lives the precepts and principles taught in the Word of God, in this way perfecting that high quality of moral character which God has promised to recompense with life eternal in His heavenly Kingdom on earth.
- in the promise of God, that a new age is coming—is near—when the earth shall be filled with His glory, His people, and God's will be done here as it is now done in heaven.

## Soon-coming events

### THE HERALD AND THE KING

OUR PLANET will soon witness the greatest events in its history. For centuries God has been silent. But that silence will soon be broken by the arrival of Elijah the prophet, who comes to herald the Second Advent of Jesus Christ. "Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the Lord:...lest I come and smite the earth with a curse" (Mal. 4:5-6).

Then shall follow the King of kings and Lord of lords, to begin His momentous work of transforming our world into the glorious and eternal Kingdom of God.

The Bible pictures all events, all men and all nations moving together toward this one God-ordained climax, when "the kingdoms of this world" will become "the kingdoms of our Lord, and of his Christ" (Rev. 11:15), a kingdom in which all will enjoy the blessings of peace, equity and prosperity. When the task is complete, our earth shall be numbered among the heavenly, glorified worlds and filled with immortal inhabitants, bringing to reality the promise of our Lord in His prayer: "Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven."

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Our cover photo was taken at Drumheller, Alberta, Canada. The strange rock formations are said to be the result of 10,000 years of erosion by wind and water. Geologists believe the brown level was the floor of an ancient sea some 70 million years ago; the upper grey sandstone section was formed from sand deposited by rivers and streams. Signs of marine life appear in these rocks.

# Megiddo Message

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# HONEST *Before* GOD

A child of eleven was fishing from the dock at his family's cabin by a New Hampshire lake. His father was with him, and together they were enjoying a small catch of sunfish and perch. Then the boy decided to tie a small silver lure to his line and practice casting. The lure struck the water, and the silver ripples shone in the moonlight.

Suddenly his pole doubled over, and the boy knew something huge was on the other end. His father looked on with admiration as the boy skillfully worked the fish alongside the dock and lifted it from the water. It was the largest he had ever seen—and it was a bass.

The boy and his father looked at the handsome fish lying there on the dock in the moonlight. The father pulled a flashlight from his pocket and looked at his watch. It was 10 P.M., two hours before the season opened. He looked at the fish, then at the boy.

"You have to put it back, son," he said.

"But Dad!" cried the boy.

"There will be another fish tomorrow," said his father, calmly.

"Not as big as this one," cried the boy.

"Perhaps not, but there will be another. You must put it back."

The boy looked around the lake. No other fishermen were near, no boats anywhere to be seen. He looked again at his father, and at the fish. No one had seen them, no one would ever know what time the fish was caught. But the boy could tell by his father's voice that the decision was not negotiable. Slowly he started to turn the hook out of the

lip of the bass and lowered it into the dark water. The creature swished its powerful body and disappeared. The boy suspected he would never again see such a great fish.

This priceless virtue called integrity is sadly missing in much of our world today. Take, for example, a recent marathon race for persons over forty. When the results of the race were challenged, it was discovered that video cameras had been installed along the path of the race, and that twenty-three of the participants had taken shortcuts of up to ten miles.

Or consider this report from the Income Tax Department. Our government allows a tax credit for each person a taxpayer supports. A few years ago the IRS began to require taxpayers to show the Social Security number of each dependent claimed. The first year under the new law, seven million dependents disappeared from the tax returns. Savings to the Treasury amounted to 2.9 billion dollars—because taxpayers could no longer claim a deduction for in-laws, grandparents, babysitters, or the family's cats and dogs.

What is integrity? The word comes from the Latin *intēge*, meaning "untouched, unbroken, undefiled, uncontaminated." Webster gives three definitions to integrity: 1) an unimpaired condition; 2) firm adherence to a code of moral or artistic values; 3) the quality or state of being complete or undivided.

And what about the synonyms of integrity? They are a lofty group, includ-

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*Truth needs no coloring, shading, covering, shrinking or stretching. Once it is altered to fit the situation, it is no longer "the truth."*



ing honor, honesty, genuineness, loyalty, righteousness, candor, trustworthiness, principle, veracity, purity, perfection. It is curious that words describing the opposite of integrity often begin with the letter "d": devious, deceitful, dissembling, double-talk, double-minded, duplicity, dishonesty, and so on.

Now surely we consider ourselves "honest." We would not lie, or take what does not belong to us. We report our income just as it is, and pay every cent we owe. We would not cheat on an exam, and we would not think of taking advantage of anyone in a business deal. Isn't this integrity?

Let us be careful, because all these conclusions are *our* judgment of ourselves. We cannot set our own standard. We are responsible to God; we must be *honest before God*, and what does He think of our integrity? For example, we say we would not lie. But have we never colored or stretched the facts we told, to make the story a little "better," or to get a little more reaction from our hearers? And are we always one hundred percent fair and square in our judgments of others, without prejudice and/or sympathy? Are we very careful not to accuse or condemn unless we have solid evidence? Are we just as diligent to report something that condemns us as something that makes us "look good"? Are we honest to the point that when we must tell something about ourselves our first thought is to tell it exactly as it is, without considering what others will think of it?

We say we would never take what does not belong to us. But if we could be absolutely sure no one would ever know, would we be tempted?

We say we would never take unfair advantage of anyone; but what does *God's* record of us reveal? Have we ever tried to give less than full measure, pressed down and running over? If we are

buying, is it honest to press the seller to a lower and still lower price, without considering what is fair value? Is it fair, if we are employed, to give our employer the bare minimum we can get by with? Or if we are the employer, is it honest to offer the very least that one will accept when we are able to do more?

Oh, let us not think that these matters belong only to the secular world. Our obligations to our fellowmen are obligations to God. If we cannot be honest with them, how can we be honest before God?

When we come to evaluating our own heart and character before God, we are safest if we judge ourselves with rigor and others with leniency. Why? Because *we* are most responsible for ourselves—our own eternal life is at stake; we have the most to lose if we go wrong; and, if we know ourselves at all, we are the one most likely to err. We are always in great danger of being too agreeable with ourselves. We need more of the humble caution of Job: "If I justify myself, mine own mouth shall condemn me: if I say, I am perfect, it shall also prove me perverse" (Job 9:20).

#### **Living Lessons in Integrity**

The Scriptures use many biographical sketches to show us the Divine virtue of integrity by making it walk before us in flesh and blood. Let us look at a few.

Samuel judged Israel with an integrity that was above reproach. Leaving office, after acceding to their wish for a king, he challenged

them: "I am old and gray-headed; and, behold, my sons are with you: and I have walked before you from my childhood unto this day. Behold, here I am: witness against me before the Lord, and before his anointed: whose ox have I taken? or whose ass have I taken? or whom have I defrauded? whom have I oppressed? or of whose hand have I received any bribe to blind mine eyes therewith? and I will restore it you. And they said, Thou hast not defrauded us, nor oppressed us, neither hast thou taken ought of any man's hand. And he said unto them, The Lord is witness against you, and his anointed is witness this day, that ye have not found ought in my hand. And they answered, He is witness" (I Sam. 12:2-5). Truly a noble testimony. Where is the civil servant today who could stand in Samuel's shoes?

We have another lesson from Scripture, from the time of Solomon. After Solomon dedicated the temple, the Lord gave him many promises. But these promises were conditioned upon Solomon's behavior. They pinpoint one very specific aspect of that behavior where a king might be severely tested: integrity. "If thou wilt walk before me, as David thy father walked, in integrity of heart, and in uprightness, to do according to all that I have commanded thee, and wilt keep my statutes and my judgments: then I will establish the throne of thy kingdom upon Israel for ever..." Then followed the words of warning: "But if ye shall at all turn from following me, and...go and serve other gods, and worship them: Then will I cut off Israel out of the land which I have given them..." (I Kings 9:4-7).

God set the ideal. He wanted singleness of purpose, undivided love and obedience at the core of Israel: in their leaders. He wanted a heart true and upright. But He did not always find what He wanted.

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*Our secular  
obligations  
are obligations  
to God.*



*True religion is a  
commitment to  
absolutes. Nothing  
shady, nothing  
questionable, nothing  
contaminated,  
nothing even slightly  
defiled—this is the  
image of the  
character God is  
seeking.*

The fact that Solomon was to walk “as David [his] father walked” is also evidence that God is a forgiving God. David sinned and sinned badly; yet even before his career was over God was commending his integrity.

God knows our frame, and He does not expect a whole lifetime without one slip. But He does demand an honest heart, a heart that can face the wrong it has committed, acknowledge it, and turn and do right. This is where the character of David shone. None sinned so dreadfully, but none ever faced it more nobly, and honestly sought God’s forgiveness. If David could rise above himself and his weaknesses by the strength of his good and honest heart, should not *we* be anxious to cultivate this same inner integrity?

Hear the prayer of David as he completed gathering materials in preparation for the temple for God, the temple which Solomon his son would build: “But who am I, and what is my people, that we should be able to offer so willingly after this sort? for all things come of thee, and of thine own have we given thee” (I Chron. 29:14). His next words reveal even more the integrity of his heart: “I know also, my God, that thou triest the heart, and hast pleasure in

uprightness. As for me, in the uprightness of mine heart I have willingly offered all these things” (I Chron 29:17). Notice that he says “In the uprightness of mine heart I have willingly offered all these things.” David well knew the heart qualities that please God.

When in the Psalms he wrote of integrity, it was because of his deep desire to have that quality dominate his life. By it he was both challenged and awed. He saw God’s presence as the height of integrity, and asked in all humility, “Lord, who shall abide in thy tabernacle? who shall dwell in thy holy hill?” In other words, who is welcome in Your presence—am I? And then he proceeded to paint the perfect, beautiful picture of integrity: “He that walked uprightly, and worketh righteousness, and speaketh the truth in his heart” (Ps. 15:1-3).

So intense was David’s longing for integrity that he was willing to open his entire life to the probing inspection of God. “Judge me, O Lord,” he wrote, “for I have walked in mine integrity: I have trusted also in the Lord; therefore I shall not slide. Examine me, O Lord, and prove me; try my reins and my heart” (Ps. 26:1-2). He was saying, Lord, put me to the test. Assay me. Test me for

## Integrity is...

*Integrity is being and doing right because we want God to love us, and “the righteous Lord loveth righteousness.”*

*Integrity is transparent goodness. It is a commitment to live true, speak true, think true, be true—because God is a God of truth.*

*Integrity is the firm conviction that right is right, and wrong is never right. And it is the same whether there are a hundred judges to testify against us, or whether we are the only one who knows.*

*Integrity is letting the fish go—even though no one will ever know, and even though it is a bigger, better fish than we could ever hope to see again—because it would be wrong to keep it.*



reality. Make sure that my gold is pure gold. Probe down into the innermost recesses of my being, and uncover any evil you can find.

Asaph, David's choir director, described God's choice of David and the character of his heart. "He chose David his servant and took him from the sheep pens; from tending the sheep he brought him to be the shepherd of his people....And David shepherded them with integrity of heart; with skillful hands he led them" (Ps. 78:70-72, NIV).

During the time of Nehemiah, several centuries later, the same high standard of integrity was still honored. When the exiled people began to return to their city, a man of integrity named Hanani, a brother of Nehemiah, was with them. When Nehemiah had finished rebuilding the walls of the city, he gave Hanani charge of the city "...because he was a man of integrity and feared God more than most men do" (Neh. 7:2, NIV). That Hanani feared the Lord "more than most men" had been evident some years earlier by his great concern for the welfare of the returned people in Jerusalem. Hanani was the man who had made the trip to Shushan, and who returned to give word to Nehemiah of the sad condition of the city walls and the bad state of the returned captives. Nehemiah began immediately to act upon the report, because he knew he could trust the source of it. All that Nehemiah knew of Hanani led him to put confidence in him as a man of integrity.

Daniel the prophet maintained solid character under extreme stress. Very aged and appointed to high position, Daniel had many enemies, who did their best to criticize and blame. But Daniel's character could not be faulted. We read, "They could find none occasion nor fault; forasmuch as he was faithful, neither was there any error or fault found in him. Then said these men, We shall not find

any occasion against this Daniel, except we find it against him concerning the law of his God" (Dan. 6:4-5). And when these evil-hearted men succeeded in persuading the king to make a law that would incriminate Daniel, and "Daniel knew that the writing was signed," he still maintained his integrity before God. We read that he "went into his house; and his windows being open in his chamber toward Jerusalem, he kneeled upon his knees three times a day, and prayed, and gave thanks before his God, as he did aforetime" (Dan. 6:9-10). Here is integrity, pure and true.

### The Basis of Integrity

Now shall we think that integrity just *happened* to be part of the make-up of these men, or is it a quality they worked to develop because they wanted to look good to their fellowmen, or did they develop it because God required it? If we begin searching the Scriptures, we discover very quickly that *God demands integrity*; and not a watered-down, situation-defined version of it but the *real thing*, pure and absolute. For how can we be "pure in heart," and be lacking in integrity? How can we be honest before God, and not be absolutely fair and honest with our fellowmen?

Just look at the terms used in Scripture to convey this absolute standard, words like "undefiled," "blameless," "holy," "pure," "up-

right," "true," "righteous," "clean." Which of these allows *any* compromising, any of those "d" words—dishonesty, deceit, duplicity? The standard is absolute, because it is Divine. We must actually become "pure as he (Christ) is pure" (I John 3:3). We must become perfect "as [our] Father which is in heaven is perfect" (Matt. 5:48). We must overcome as Christ overcame (Rev. 3:21), to the same degree, the same extent, the same level of attainment. This means an integrity that will not bend, no matter how severely it is tested.

This is the law. Hear the apostle Paul commanding his brethren to grow up in Christ by "speaking the truth in love" (Eph. 4:15). Again, "Wherefore putting away lying, speak every man truth with his neighbor" (Eph. 4:25). Again, "Lie not one to another, seeing that ye have put off the old man with his deeds" (Col. 3:9). "Walk honestly, as in the day" (Rom. 13:13). "Provide things honest in the sight of all men" (Rom. 12:17). These are definite commands that leave no room for any tampering with the facts.

And the law covers more than mere words. We must also be *upright in heart*. Again and again we read that God's promises are to the upright. "The upright in heart shall see thy face...The upright shall dwell in the land, and the perfect shall remain in it...For the righteous Lord loveth righteousness; his countenance doth behold the upright...The Lord loveth the righteous...He loveth him that followeth after righteousness..." He saves those who are "upright in heart" and "the prayer of the upright is his delight" (Prov. 2:21; Ps. 15:1-2; 11:7; 146:8; Prov. 15:9; Ps. 7:10; Prov. 15:8).

On the other side of the picture is the hatred God has toward those who are lacking this high quality, and "hate" is a strong word. He

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*Strict honesty allows  
for no "fixing up" of  
what we tell, whether  
much or little.*



*How much does integrity mean to me? How committed am I to being honest before God?*

hates "all workers of iniquity" (Ps. 5:5). Again, "These six things doth the Lord hate," and the second is a "lying tongue" (Prov. 6:16-19). Those shut out of the eternal City are "dogs, and whoremongers, and sorcerers, and idolators"—no worry there, but listen to the rest: "and whosoever loveth and maketh a lie" (Rev. 22:15).

Now here is a serious concern. For of all the disappointments or sorrows we can imagine, to find ourselves outside the eternal City would be the worst. So let us think more about this thing called integrity, and how God regards us.

What underlies our commitment to integrity? Just how serious a matter is it?

*Our commitment to integrity begins with a deep and all-encompassing love for truth and a corresponding hatred of all untruth. We love truth because we love the God who is a God of truth. We want to be honest because above all we want to be right before God.*

This commitment to integrity affects every area of our lives—what we believe and what we teach; what we tell others and what we tell ourselves; what we feel, and think, and do before others and before God.

Integrity is transparent goodness. It is a commitment to live true, speak true, think true, be true—because God is a God of truth.

Integrity is the firm conviction that right is right, and wrong is never right. And it is the same whether there are a hundred judges to testify against us, or whether we are the only one who knows.

Integrity is letting the fish go—even though no one will ever know, and even though it is a bigger, better fish than we could ever hope to see again—because it would be wrong to keep it.

This commitment to integrity is serious business, because it means commitment to truth *without regard to personal consequences, advantages or disadvantages*. This means

◆ that we would lose face, rather than lose our integrity;

◆ that we would sacrifice money, before we would falsify the facts;

◆ that we would give up our job, before we would displease our heavenly Employer;

◆ that we would fail an exam, before we would stoop to cheating;

◆ that we would be evil spoken of, before we would cover up the truth;

◆ that we would lose our friends, before we would compromise our values;

◆ that we would lose even our life before we would do or say anything that is wrong before God.

Here is a standard of integrity that God commands. This is what it means to be honest before God.

It is a standard not easy to attain, for it is as contrary to our nature as anything we could ever attempt. It is a change, right to the core of our being, for naturally we are self-seeking and self-preserving. To attain to God's standard of integrity, to be totally honest before God means sacrificing the gratifications we instinctively crave in order to be loyal to truth in the very innermost recesses of our heart. It is to utter the prayer of David, "Cleanse thou me from secret faults. Keep back thy servant also from presumptuous sins; let them not have dominion over me: then shall I be upright, and I shall be innocent from the great transgression" (Ps. 19:13). Secret fault or presumptuous sin—both were abhorrent to David. He wanted only to be right, and this was the heart quality that won him God's love.

What is the difference between our honesty and the principle generally upheld? It is not in its fact but in its obligation. For ours is a commitment not to the flimsy decrees of conscience but to the God of heaven. And the potential benefit of our commitment is not merely the approval of our family, or friends, or society, but the highest blessings of Omnipotence, "even life for evermore." With such a reward in prospect, we must not—we dare not—compromise for *any* situation, even if it be so extreme as a matter of life and death. We must be true, whatever the cost in personal honor, personal suffering, personal sacrifice, personal loss. Whatever the test, whatever the situa-



tion, we will not compromise our integrity. However much we may have to suffer, *we will not sin.*

### Honesty In What We Say

Honesty is usually associated with words. And speaking the truth is one very important part of honesty. If we are not honest in our words, if we are not 100 percent true to the truth in what we tell to one another, how can we expect to be counted honest before God?

"Lie not one to another" means just that, no more and no less. A lie is an intentional altering of what we relate as fact. We may misjudge a situation, but a misjudgment is not a lie. Or we may misinterpret, or misunderstand; but *we must not misrepresent.*

As Christians, we are committed to what is true at every level of life. It does not matter how that truth may affect us or anyone else, if only it is *the truth*. Strict honesty allows no "fixing up" of what we tell, whether much or little. Prudence may advise us not to tell all we know, but we must not falsify the facts; we must not knowingly deceive.

Truth needs no coloring, shading, covering, shrinking or stretching. Once it is altered to fit the situation, it is no longer "the truth." Like pure water, once anything is added to it, it is no longer pure.

If we are 100 percent truthful, our telling will be the same whether others can verify the facts or whether they cannot; and whether others will accuse or whether they will commend.

Most distorting of the facts is done to give a better impression, to save face, or to cover our mistakes. But as Christians, none of this is allowed. Even in unimportant details we must do our best to be factual, lest it become a mark against us on our record before God. For "He who is faithful in a very little is faithful also in much; and he who is dishonest in a very little is dishonest also in much" (Luke 16:10, NIV).

Instinctively we fear the judgments of others. But there is in reality nothing to fear on the human level. We are not seeking the honors and plaudits of men. We are here to learn the lessons we need to live eternally, to get right before God, to prepare for life in the world to come. We are children in school, training for a future role. And we can expect that the curriculum will not be always easy or to our liking. We can expect discipline, suffering and chastening. But what will it matter, if only we can pass the grade, and advance to higher levels?

Another area requiring the utmost in honesty is being honest in what we tell ourselves. For it is

easy to justify what we should condemn—and *would* condemn if it were in another. But when the offender is ourselves, we are more concerned for what looks good, feels good, or sounds good than for the facts. The words of the apostle Paul, though spoken in a different situation, strike like an arrow to the mark: "Happy is he that condemneth not himself in that thing which he alloweth" (Rom. 14:22). To tell ourselves we were not upset when we were, or that we were honest when we were not, does no one any good, and does us much harm. For what we do not acknowledge we will not correct. How much better to take the attitude of the Psalmist and pray, "Incline not my heart to any evil thing" (Ps. 141:4)—and mean it.

### Honesty in What We Believe

Then, too, we must be honest in what we believe. By accepting and believing anything that is less than the truth, we become party to it and sin, for God holds us responsible for what we believe. The command is explicit: "Prove all things; hold fast that which is good" (I Thess. 5:21). Not, take what appeals to you, or what is comfortable, or what is in line with your own thoughts or ideas, but "Prove all things, hold fast that which is good."

*A highly respected English society lady was asked if she would compromise her integrity if she were offered enough.*

*"How much will you offer?" she asked.*

*Immediately her questioner became her accuser. "Ah!" he replied, so you will compromise!"*

*"Oh, no," she replied, "I only asked what you would offer."*

*"No, Lady," he replied. "You gave your consent. Now we are only haggling over the price."*



## HONEST Before GOD

This is where our founder, Mr. Nichols, took a firm stand for integrity very early in life, a stand which won for him the honorary and well-earned title, "an honest man." Even as a child, he wanted no part of falsehood, even if it be as seemingly innocent as the Santa Claus myth. If it was not true, why have anything to do with it? The lifelong pursuit of this high goal of integrity resulted in rediscovering the true teachings of the Word of God, long buried by those who put popularity above principle.

If we are honest in what we believe, we will also be honest in what we teach. This means being absolutely true to the truth we profess, though it make us unpopular, or even threaten our lives. Here is a high test of courage—as well as integrity—for all spokesmen of God in all ages. For more than one, loyalty to the truth, loyalty to the faith, has meant death. And even when there was no threat of death, it is still a high calling, and a high responsibility not to be taken lightly, for truth that is tailored to individual tastes is no longer the truth. It is easy to withhold emphasis when emphasis would not be popular. It is easy to downplay, modify, or partially cover up a point which we know will

displease our listener. Oh, let us be careful, for integrity allows no latitude for compromising, to accommodate ourselves or anyone else.

In this aspect of integrity, as in every other, Jesus is the supreme model. Even His enemies observed His strict loyalty to truth. Wanting desperately to criticize, they could only declare, "Teacher, we know you are a man of integrity. You aren't swayed by men, because you pay no attention to who they are; but you teach the way of God in accordance with the truth" (Mark 12:14, NIV). Jesus' character was unimpeachable. They knew He was not pandering to men's carnal instincts. Integrity for Him meant speaking the truth no matter what anyone wanted to hear.

The commitment to truth is in reality part of our commitment to obedience. "He that hath my word, let him speak my word faithfully." And when we realize that we are speaking *for God*, that we are handling that which is sacred, can we do any less? Just as the prophet Ezekiel was told not to temper his words to the wishes of the people. He was to preach the word of the Lord plainly and clearly, "whether they will hear, or whether they will forbear"

Miss Chaucer was writing on the blackboard as four boys slipped quietly through the door and took their accustomed seats in the back of the large room. They desperately hoped their tardiness would not be observed.

A moment later she was looking squarely at them. "What's the excuse today?" she asked in her usual, firm, unaffected manner.

"Flat tire, Miss Chaucer. We're awful sorry," volunteered the first.

"And what a time we had changing it," exclaimed the second.

"And when we got the new tire on, you might know, it was flat too, and we had to go a couple of miles before we could find some air," added the third.

Without comment Miss Chaucer resumed the history lecture, and the boys sighed inwardly that her remonstrance was so easy.

At the appointed time, Miss Chaucer dismissed the history class, and asked the four boys to remain for a few minutes. As soon as all the other students had left the room, she spoke:

"I won't put your tardiness on the record today, but I'm sure you are all aware that you missed the quiz today. You will need a sheet of paper, and a pencil..." She paused while the boys pulled paper and pencil from their satchels and prepared for the quiz.

"Answer just this one question: Which tire was flat?" □



(Ezek. 2:5). Of course he was not popular. Who ever wanted to hear that they were not as good as they thought, that they needed to repent and drastically reform their lives?

With counsel that reflects his own personal commitment, the apostle Paul wrote to one of his young preachers named Titus. In the second chapter of that letter he gave what he felt the church at Crete needed. In the middle of it, Paul told Titus the direction his own life must take. Five key words form the core of Paul's message: "In your teaching show integrity" (Titus 2:7, NIV). The reason? "So that those who oppose you may be ashamed because they have nothing bad to say about us" (v. 8). Notice the "us"—Paul included himself. Well he realized that being Titus' mentor, he could be incriminated with the young preacher. But Paul's only concern was that they do right, so that the Gospel and those professing it could not be slandered.

This same high standard of closely guarded integrity is required of all who handle the word of truth. In Rom. 1:18 Paul warns solemnly against those who "hold the truth in unrighteousness." He realized how seriously any mishandling of the Word could destroy faith among the believers and bring the cause of Christ into disrepute.

Almost the last and final words of Scripture pronounce a curse upon any who would dare to add to or take from the sacred message: "For I testify unto every man that heareth the words of the prophecy of this book, If any man shall add unto these things, God shall add unto him the plagues that are written in this book: and if any man shall take away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part out of the book of life, and out of the holy city, and from the things which are written in this book" (Rev. 22:18-19).

## Honesty and Us

The whole subject of integrity comes down to us, with the question, How much does integrity mean to me? How committed am I to being honest before God? What is my standard of integrity in teaching, holding, and modeling the Word of God?

Honesty is often thought to be a virtue taught in childhood, but unfortunately, many of us did not learn it as children. But that does not mean that it cannot be mastered—even perfected—in later life. God does not condemn us for what we have to learn. He condemns us only for what we *do not* learn. Children who are given such a strong incentive to succeed, or achieve, or win that they will compromise their integrity to do it, face a lifelong struggle if they would be honest before God. Yet God does not allow an impediment we cannot conquer, or a temptation stronger than we can resist. What we have to do has been done before us, and *we can do it* if we set to the task with all our will.

To be honest before God means a total change in our values. Instinctively we like what pleases us. But when we exchange our thoughts for God's, *nothing in all the world matters so much as being and doing right.*

Until we actually achieve this new attitude, we have difficulty even imagining its impact upon our lives. But is it not a change worth making, *when it means our own eternal life?*

---

*What is my standard  
of integrity in teaching,  
holding, and modeling  
the Word of God?*

Do we see integrity as priceless, something we dare not compromise, even at the price of life? This was Jesus' principle. He would die before He would deny His kingship, His commission, His Messiahship. His loyalty to God stood above everything else.

True religion is a commitment to absolutes. Nothing shady, nothing questionable, nothing contaminated, nothing even slightly defiled—this is the image of the character God is seeking.

A character that will not bend, an integrity that will not compromise, an honesty that is open and unvarying whatever the situation, whatever the temptation, whatever may be of personal gain or loss—here is the character God is seeking. This is the quality that made Jesus "holy, harmless, undefiled" (Heb. 7:26).

It is said of the saints in Revelation that they "loved not their lives unto the death" (Rev. 12:11). Their commitment to be and do right was to them more precious than life itself. Those whom Jesus valued among the church at Sardis were those few who had "not defiled their garments; and they shall walk with me in white: for they are worthy" (Rev. 3:4).

We read also of the saints in whose mouth "was found no guile: for they are without fault before the throne of God" (Rev. 14:5). "Without fault," without guile—nothing but that which is absolutely pure, true and right—here is the standard of the saints.

Let this be our standard, too. Let us say when we are tempted, My integrity is on trial before God. Shall I compromise, and retain a better impression with men, or shall I stand the test, and receive God's honor?

The decision is ours to make—daily, hourly. And remember, the stakes are life and death. □





# Free from the Love of Money

*For the true believer, money is not security. All security lies in God.*

---

**C**hristians are never free to do as they please, think as they please, or spend as they please—because nothing they have belongs to them.

**W**hen the law thundered from mount Sinai, it had in it a single command about being single-minded: "You shall have no other gods before me" (Ex. 20:3).

This order set forth what is a timeless principle with God: that He must be first, that no person, animal, idea, or thing may come between the loyal human worshiper and his God.

"No other gods" is general. Other passages of Scripture are more specific. Near the end of the book of Hebrews is this command: "Keep your life free from love of money" (Heb. 13:5, RSV). Do we wonder why? for no one can live without money. But look more closely, and you will see that the warning is not against money but against the love of money. We are not told to be free from money but to be free from the *love of it*.

Jesus spoke the same warning when He said, "Beware of covetousness, for a man's life consisteth not in the abun-

dance of the things which he possesseth."

God is realistic. He knows our needs. He does not condemn ambition, or commend indifference or indolence; nor is He discouraging hard work. Rather, He would protect the inner life from that which could destroy it, for the love of money is an insidious and perilous temptation.

Is this too much? Does anyone feel like saying to Jesus, "Mind your own business. My money is my own, and I shall do with it as I please"? Or do we feel like explaining to Jesus that the Twentieth Century is very different from the First, that in today's world "business is business," and that no one could even survive in the modern marketplace with Jesus' complacent attitude toward money?

But no, Jesus knew the Twentieth Century fully as well as He knew the



First, and He knew what He was saying. He knew we needed His warning, fully as much in the Twentieth Century as in the First. Jesus had a command and a warning for every area of life. Those who are at home face one type of temptation; those who do business in the marketplace face another—and also another area in which to render special service. Jesus would have His followers loyal all the time, wherever they were. He would be the last to say that anyone who makes goods for sale, or who renders service, is evil. Far from it. The sin is not in the activity, nor in the acquiring or exchange of money, but in the love of it. Even in the marketplace, one's first love must be reserved for God and all that He represents—goodness, integrity, honesty, uprightness.

No area of life is excluded from one's field of Christian service. The marketplace is just as much the place for Christian ethics as the home, or the church, or the workplace. "Thou hast given a banner to them that fear thee, that it may be displayed because of the truth" (Ps. 60:4), that it may be displayed anywhere and everywhere we go. Christian ethics, Christian compassion, Christian integrity, a Christlike way of thinking and acting—these are the duties of Christ's followers anywhere, everywhere, all the time.

We are never free to do as we please, think as we please, or spend our time or strength or health or means to gratify selfish desires, self-set goals, fleshly instincts. Why? Because nothing we have belongs to us; all that we have and are belongs to God.

Thousands of zealous believers have declared that the marketplace and Jesus are not compatible, but Jesus never said such a thing. His message was, Do it right.

In the marketplace this translates into telling the truth about one's product, being fair to one's employees, using one's resources in the fear of God, being

content with a reasonable profit, and resisting the temptation to greed. Money like everything else in a Christian's life must be handled right.

Not infrequently an action is justified in the world of business with a phrase, "There's nothing wrong with it." But this is not enough for the Christian. We must ask also, Is it right? Is there any positive value in it?

For the true believer, money is not security. Money is not stability. Money is not a status symbol, or even a sign of prosperity. For the believer, all security lies with God. Anything of this world can fail—and will fail. But in God we have no fear, for His promise offers full coverage comprehensive insurance: "I will never leave thee nor forsake thee." Never.

And "never" is a long time. □

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**T**he marketplace is just as much the place for Christian ethics as the home, or the church, or the workplace.

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# When The Day

*Every Apostolic sermon climaxed with the resounding theme: "He's coming!" Jesus had gone away and He would surely return.*

The whole New Testament is vibrant with the hope of Christ's imminent return. This bright prospect was the keynote of the Apostles' message. Every sermon climaxed with the resounding theme: "He's coming!" The New Testament records more than 300 direct references to Christ's second advent, not to mention numerous allusions to the event. This means that on the average, one out of every twenty-five verses repeats it, affirms it, declares it, or converges upon it. It was a theme constantly on their minds. Jesus had been with them; Jesus had gone away; and Jesus would return again.

Revelation 22 is a masterpiece of timely exhortation, still echoing the vibrant theme. Following twenty-one chapters of graphic, tumultuous prophecy, here in almost breathless, rapid-fire succession, John lists the responsibilities incumbent on every believer. And why were these responsibilities so important? Because the return of Jesus is to be the next noteworthy event in the history of the earth. His coming is imminent.

Why do we say imminent when John was writing this message more than 1900 years in advance of the great event? Because John was writing his message for those who would be living at the end of the age, when the Second Advent would be truly "at hand." At the same time, he wanted to convey a spirit of urgency to every believer, for none had longer than his lifetime to get ready.

As we read these verses, we get the feeling that John has more to tell us than can possibly be said in the time remaining. So, like any good writer, he prioritizes his thoughts to hold the attention of his readers.

First he wants us to get the clearest possible picture of that bright new world, where all is peace, and light, and continual prosperity. He shows us the "pure river of water of life, clear as crystal, proceeding out of the throne of God and of the Lamb." Beside it grows the tree of life, bearing fruit continually. And above it all is the shining "throne of God and of the Lamb," surrounded by the comings and goings of a host of happy servants. "And they shall see his face; and his name shall be in their foreheads. And there shall be no night there,...for the Lord God giveth them light: and they shall reign for ever and ever."

Just looking at the picture fills us with love and a longing desire: *We want to be there!* This is just what John wants us to feel, and so he adds immediately this note of sublime certainty. What you are seeing, he says, is no idle dream. "These sayings are faithful and true" (v. 6).

Then quickly he interjects a word of warning: These blessings are not for everyone. "Blessed is he"—who? Who will be the recipient of this wonderful blessedness? "Blessed is he that keepeth the sayings of the prophecy of this book" (v. 7). Here is a message meant to put us on our toes, wide awake and alert. There is no time for sleeping. We



# Is Imminent

are soldiers on duty. If we would experience those delightful blessings, we must be keepers of the sayings of this Book. And we must do it *now*, for when that day arrives it will be too late. When that time arrives, as we are, so shall we be. "He that is unjust, let him be unjust still: and he which is filthy, let him be filthy still: and he that is righteous, let him be righteous still: and he that is holy, let him be holy still" (v. 11).

Then, as if there is no more time for reminiscing, John repeats the warning of Jesus: "Behold, I come quickly." In case we missed it the first time, we have another opportunity to hear it; another opportunity to heed it. For hear it we must, and heed it we must.

It is as if our commanding officer is giving us last minute instructions.

And so he says it again in different words: "Blessed are they that do his commandments, that they may have right to the tree of life, and may enter in through the gates into the city. For without are dogs, and sorcerers, and whoremongers, ...and whosoever loveth and maketh a lie" (vs. 14-15).

The principle part of the message ended, Jesus begins His concluding remarks, as it were. "I Jesus have sent mine angel to testify unto you these things in the churches. I am the root and the offspring of David, and the bright

and morning star" (v. 16). What a continuing rapturous picture of beauty!

Then follows an invitation: "And the Spirit and the bride say, Come. And let him that heareth say, Come. And let him that is athirst come. And whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely" (v. 17).

Then, as if almost forgotten, there is one more warning to be given: that every hearer of these words is individually responsible for transmitting them in their integrity. Woe unto him who should dare to contaminate this Book by either adding to or taking from its sacred contents.

Then follows one more urgent reminder: "He which testifieth these things saith, Surely I come quickly," to which John adds his own personal signature of faith: "Amen. Even so, come, Lord Jesus" (v. 20).

**W**hat should be our personal reaction to this imminence, this urgency, this prophecy, the fulfillment of which will affect everyone of us?

There is nothing more vivid than the admonition in this chapter, so familiar to all of us, yet always new in its demand: "Behold, I come quickly: blessed is he that keepeth the sayings of the prophecy of this book" (Rev. 22:7)

The imminent return of Jesus Christ demands that we make our lives count—not tomorrow, not sometime in the future, but *today*. It is easy to say what we will do tomorrow—what we will do when we finish school, when we get the right job, when the children are grown up, when the business venture works out, when we are older, when we do not have so many responsibilities, and so on, and on, and on. But the tragic thing about living in the future is that...it never comes.

God wants us to obey right now, right where we are. Now is the only moment we can claim. Right now we must live with God at the center of our lives. Right now we must be making our present situation—whatever it is—glorify God. Right now we must be molding the character that pleases Him, fashioning ourselves into His mental and moral likeness.

Why the urgency? Because we are under authority. We have pledged ourselves to be loyal to One who has proven Himself loyal before us.

All of us respond instinctively to the presence of visible authority. Take, for example, the patrolman who chances to follow us down the freeway. Can we forget him, so long as we can see him in our rearview mirror? Or perhaps we are traveling blissfully along, when we suddenly spot him tucked behind the bushes or under a bridge along the roadside. Instinctively we tap our brakes or look at our speedometer—because we realize we are being checked.

Can we not feel this same consciousness of being under God's authority as we await the arrival of our Lord? For He has complete authority over us. At His Word we shall live or die—eternally—and that sentence will be given just



*God wants us to sense the urgency of the time in which we are living, and the seriousness of our own personal obedience. We cannot afford to be heedless, carefree, or indifferent, even for a moment.*

according to what we have done. We are writing the record which will witness for or against us at Judgment Day.

The angel told John that these great events would happen "shortly," as it is rendered in our King James Version. The Greek word used here is *tachy*, which means "suddenly." The promise was not that these events would happen soon in time, but rather that their occurrence would be unexpected, without warning. Once these events begin, they will happen in rapid succession.

This thought is given emphasis by the admonition which accompanies it: "Blessed is he that keepeth the sayings of the prophecy of this book." In other words, because of the imminence of this great event, because Jesus will come suddenly, now is the time for obedience. Now is the time to "keep" the sayings of the prophecy of this Book.

When God speaks, He does not speak idly. He is commanding, and He means that His Word should be obeyed. In the realm of Divine knowledge, to know is to be responsible for that knowledge. We are to give heed to the law of God, observe it, keep it, obey it. It is to be our law of life, governing our conversation, our conduct, and all that we do.

God does not give us His knowledge so that we can correctly analyze world situations, or even impress our friends. He reveals His knowledge so that we can believe—to the point of acting upon that belief. For only the doers will be saved. "Blessed are they that do his commandments"—only the doers will be blessed. If we study the Word of God only to get information, only to be informed, we are missing the point. God's Word is not for information but for motivation.

God wants us to see the glory and beauty of what He is doing. Above all, He wants us to sense the urgency of the time in which we are living, and

the seriousness of our own personal obedience. We cannot afford to be heedless, carefree, or indifferent, even for a moment. Urgency is the spirit of His Book, and when we have caught that, we can begin to understand the import of the message.

What was Peter's reaction when he heard the message? Let us read his words: "Seeing then that all these things shall be dissolved, what manner of persons ought ye to be in all holy conversation and godliness" (II Pet. 3:11).

The knowledge that Jesus is coming makes a definite demand upon our lives now. If we read His message and do not hear Him pounding into our minds the necessity of obedience, we have missed the message.

When is Jesus coming? This is the question we would all like to have answered. But God has not chosen to inform us. The purpose of the Bible is not to tell us exactly when He will return but rather to have us get ready for it, to live in perpetual expectancy. Then we will not have to be so concerned about the exact time.

If we put Christ's coming too far into the future, we lose the impetus for working today—which is precisely what God intended us to have. The real issue is not future but present. Jesus may come today. But if we wake up tomorrow and He has not come, let us live tomorrow as if He were coming that day. This type of thinking is the best motivation to live as we ought to—in expectancy.

For Jesus Christ is coming. His advent is just as sure as the sunrise tomorrow morning. So let us be up and doing, let us obey Him, worship Him, serve Him. Let us obey as we have never obeyed before. Let us worship with hearts that are fervent and intense.

Let us serve as if there may not be a tomorrow of opportunity for us.

Where we will be tomorrow depends on what we do today. □



*In a little white house on the top of a hill,  
Where, all the day long, it is peaceful and still,  
There lives a queer woman, who, I have been told,  
Thinks more of her God than she does of her gold.  
She minds her own business, as something that pays,  
And claims she would rather have virtue than praise.  
She never indulges in gossip but tries  
To set people thinking, to work for the prize.*

*They say she is never discouraged or blue,  
Though some think that she has enough reason to;  
But, counting the blessings that fall to her lot,  
She says there are more reasons why she should not.  
She never gets angry, impatient, or tried  
When accidents happen or trials betide;  
But she will remark, in the midst of a song,  
"Oh, things will be evening up before long."*

*She never is present at dances, and such,  
They say, and with parties is never in touch;  
And I have been told that she never attends  
The pictures, or goes to a show with her friends.  
But when there is sickness or trouble in town  
This queer little, dear little woman goes down;  
And one person whispered to me, "You will find  
She's better than doctors and lawyers combined."*

*One day, as the sun slowly sank in the west,  
I stopped at this queer woman's house for a rest;  
And though she was poor, as I plainly could see,  
She said, "There is more than sufficient for me."  
Then, when I accepted her offer to sup,  
And she had the second time filled up my cup,  
She said, "I must tell of God's wonderful Truth  
That, faithfully followed, restores us our youth."*

*She beamed as she told of the Saviour's return  
To earth before long, and of how we must earn  
The prize He has offered, a life without end,  
That's promised to all who their ways will amend.  
"To share in the Kingdom that's coming on earth,  
The government promised to Christ at His birth,"  
She said, "Is well worth anything we can do.  
And, better than all, I believe it is true."*

*The hands of the clock went around, and around,  
While I sat, amazed at the things to be found  
Between the two lids of the Bible, and when  
I arose to depart, was invited again.  
Now, of this queer woman I've thought quite a bit,  
Since I at her table was welcomed to sit,  
And if all I've witnessed and heard can be true,  
I wish there were more people like her—don't you?*

—L.L. Snyder

## *The Shut Door* (A Lost Opportunity)



**M**ore than one tale has been told of those who waited until it was too late. It is in the parable of the Ten Virgins. Five were wise, and five were foolish. But remember, those five foolish virgins were not anti-Christ nor were they totally unprepared for the event. Their fault was lack of foresight. They were not prepared for the long delay. "And while they went to buy [oil], the bridegroom came; and they that were ready went in with him to the marriage; and the door was shut." Opportunities are not forever.

The same eventually overtook the people of Noah's time. After all those years of preaching and building, the day arrived when the ark was finished, and Noah and his family went in. "And the Lord shut him in" (Gen. 7:16). The open door closed.

Luke 19:20 tells of the man who hid his talent in a napkin. He committed no heinous crime. He was not openly defiant or rebellious or dishonest. His sin was that he did nothing with his opportunity. When the lord of that servant returned, all that the servant could show was his one unused talent. And the door of opportunity was closed. Said his master, "Take from him the pound, and give it to him that hath ten pounds" (Luke 19:24).

Neglect is serious. "How shall we escape, if we neglect so great salvation...?" (Heb. 2:3). Doors do close.

God calls us to act with decision while it is day. "Now is the accepted time: now is the day of salvation" (II Cor. 6:2). It is now or never. In fact, God does not even give us the promise of tomorrow; only now. Now is the only sure moment. "Behold, I stand at the door, and knock: if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me" (Rev. 3:20).

Unused opportunities, like unused muscles, atrophy. The unwound clock stops. Unentered doors close.

Opportunity is not forever. Act now. Delay will destroy you. □



## Introduction

A professor at a local theological seminary has written a book entitled *The Unknown Bible*, and another scholar has published a similar book entitled *The Book Nobody Knows*. In contrast we want to write about *The Known Bible, and Its Defense*.

In *The Unknown Bible*, the author is trying to prove that many people have been deceived by the Bible, esteeming it pure gold when in fact (he believes) it contains contradictions, impossibilities, and cruel doctrines. The author represents the Bible as saying:

*In 1933 the first edition of The Known Bible and Its Defense was written and published by the Reverend Maud Hembree to answer in a single work the challenges and criticisms brought against the Bible by the best contemporary scholarship.*

*In view of the vast amount of evidence that has accumulated since that time we, nearly six decades later, feel a need for a second edition of The Known Bible, which we will publish first as a series of articles.*

—The Editor

"I am a copy of a library of books called the Bible. It is proclaimed from pulpit and printed page that I am the best seller in the western world. Millions of Bibles are published each year. I have been translated into hundreds of languages and dialects.... I have influenced the development of medicine, law, art, literature.... My cultural significance cannot be overestimated. And yet, I am the unknown Bible. I was purchased in a book-shop on Main Street. I am owned by one whose name was carefully inscribed upon my first page.... Most of my life has been passed up here on this shelf. Sometimes they take me down to press pansies between my pages.... I am one of the least appreciated books in their library. I wonder why!... Am I not the unknown Bible?"

Many people say, "Why teach the Bible to our children, when in later years they will find that it is mostly folklore and superstition, and will discard it and all religion together?" This objection disappears when we really understand the Bible and learn that it bears no resemblance to the maze of theology that has grown up around it. Human interpretations of the Bible, in defiance of the command that "no prophecy of scripture is of any private interpretation" (II

Pet. 1:20), have lead to a vast amount of superstition for which the Bible is in no way responsible. As Arthur Weigall says in his *Paganism In Our Christianity*,

"On all sides one hears it said that the dogmas of Christianity can no longer be accepted by the modern mind, there being such a woof of nonsense interwoven across the warp of Christian belief that the intelligent layman must needs



weave his own religious fabric. Not merely the English Prayer Book in England, but the whole scheme of Christian theology as taught throughout the world by the various sects and churches is now under criticism....

"I believe that much of the generally accepted Christian doctrine is derived from pagan sources and not from Jesus Christ at all, a great deal of ecclesiastical Christianity being, indeed, so definitely paganism re-dressed that one might almost speak of it as the last stronghold of the old heathen gods.... The future life of the Church, and, indeed, of Christianity itself, depends on one thing and one thing alone; namely, the weeding out of such of its teachings as have not the genuine authority of Jesus Christ.... Drastic measures are needed to rescue the sublime figure of our Lord from the press of this motley company, and to relieve the original doctrine from the stranglehold of a theology and a habit of religious thought which are to be traced to primitive paganism."

Can one wonder that the Bible, covered by the "woof of nonsense," has been to the masses and still is *The Unknown Bible*?

But the Bible is not to blame because the Church grew weary of following the mandates of its Master. The Bible is not to blame for the Church re-writing its doctrines to incorporate pagan philosophies and ideas, and re-dressing its customs to welcome pagans into the Church. Then, not allowing the Bible to be read by the layman, she succeeded in forcing her teachings upon everyone, and so the great mass of believers were turned from its truths to fables. This is exactly what St. Paul foretold would happen (II Tim. 4:3, 4).

But the Bible is not to blame. As God gave it, and studied by subjects as He intended, the Bible is harmo-

nious from beginning to end and free from contradictions, absurdities, and errors, agreeing perfectly with reason, nature and all true science.

For example, consider a few of the common beliefs held almost universally throughout Christendom for more than a thousand years: the doctrine that all creation came into existence about six thousand years ago; that Adam and Eve were the first man and woman; that a cruel God condemned billions for the sin of one man, then crucified His innocent Son to get out of the predicament; that the sun in the heavens stood still at Joshua's command; that God created a brimstone pit in which to torture His erring children eternally—doctrines such as these have led to the rejection of the Bible by many who really think but do not think far enough. If they would investigate before condemning, they would find that the Book is not responsible for the absurd, unreasonable, and cruel dogmas taught in its name.

Study the pages of history, both profane and ecclesiastical, and you will discover the reason for the problem, that in the darkness and superstition of the Medieval Age the believers were turned away from the plain, beautiful truths of Divine Revelation to pagan fables. While the total darkness of the medieval age prevailed, the majority were content. But as knowledge began to increase, as independent minds began to reason and think and study, the former beliefs could no longer be accepted. The result: a rapid rise in skepticism, atheism and infidelity, and with the decline in religious education, a parallel rise in crime and immorality and an underscoring of the fact that the civilization of a nation depends upon some form of religious instruction as a deterrent against evil.

If religious education of any kind is better than none during the formative

*The Bible is not to blame for the Church rewriting its doctrines to incorporate pagan philosophies.*

*The Bible as God gave it is free from contradictions, absurdities and errors, and is in harmony with reason and all true science.*



years of life, how much better to give religious instruction which will stand the test of higher education and skepticism; in other words to teach true Bible teaching instead of theology. True Bible teaching never injured anyone, Protestant, Catholic or Jew, and only by it can anyone hope to become truly free (John 8:32).

*The Bible lives! And it can never die!  
For centuries those ancient pioneers  
Whom God inspired to be His holy seers  
Wrote down the words He gave them from on high.  
What one book lacks some other will supply—  
The Message is complete—no fault appears;  
And yet it was the growth of many years.  
Man's every need this Book can satisfy.*

Many thinking people today recognize that as a civilization we have developed our material culture but neglected our spiritual life. Yet belief in God and faith in an inspired Bible can still work wonders in the life of the individual.

From the evidence in the Bible, from the wonders of the mighty universe which we can observe, from fulfilled prophecy verified on the pages

of history, from the very life which we possess, we believe that there is one real, living, personal, All-wise God, of whom the apostle Paul spoke when he said: "O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God!" (Rom. 11:33). and that the Bible as God gave it is His inspired Word. Upon the truth or falsity of this proposition depends all hope of a future life, for only such a God has power to bestow life. We therefore ask all who are anxious to obtain a future life to examine carefully the evidence and "prove all things; hold fast that which is good" (1 Thess. 5:21).

We have no contention against those who find no solace or satisfaction in the average church, either Catholic or Protestant. We cannot fault any who refuse to accept their unfounded doctrines, or to adopt their paganized practices. If all we had was the religion taught by the nominal churches, we, too, would join the ranks of the nonbelievers. But when we recognize that the beliefs and practices of the average church are not those advocated by the Bible or its authors, how different the picture! How hopeful the outlook! Life takes on new meaning and purpose, and all creation becomes the plan of God moving steadily forward to a great climax when God's will shall be done on earth as now it is done in heaven above.

## Looking Closer at the Bible

**T**he Bible—Word of God, or human invention? We stand at the parting of the ways; in so vital a matter there can be no middle course.

For several centuries the Bible, though misunderstood and grossly misrepresented by its professed friends, was at least respected throughout

Christendom as the revealed will of God. A few prominent atheists and infidels denied its authority, but their influence was limited. In the Nineteenth Century, however, a state of mind known as the Higher Criticism developed. A horde of European savants, eager to air their theories,



tried to tear the Bible to pieces without realizing of what it was made. By the latter part of the Nineteenth Century, even the clergy had become infected with the virus of skepticism. The true teachings of the Bible had been, in the words of the historians, long "buried under a senseless mass of superstition and error"; now even the Book itself fell into disrepute.

Several causes contributed, the chief being the sudden increase in scientific knowledge which challenged many ancient and cherished doctrines which—unfortunately and erroneously—had been linked to the Bible. Suddenly the reading public saw what looked like an irreconcilable conflict between science and the Bible.

In the early Twentieth Century the movement spread like a prairie fire until among the educated and in the largest churches and theological seminaries the Bible came to be treated with a mixture of condescending tolerance and scholastic superiority; outstanding literature and sound philosophy, and little more.

Now, after nearly a century of skepticism, higher criticism, and irreligious education, what can one expect but widespread atheism and despair? The serious student, wearied and confused by the multiplicity of faiths, his moral senses outraged by the unreasonable, absurd, and cruel doctrines which were for so many years masqueraded as truth, assumes that the Scriptures are the authority for such fables, and as a result condemns Christianity as a barbarous superstition and joins the ranks of the nonreligious. The breakdown of moral and ethical standards and the rising tide of crime are but natural results of the removal of the discipline of religion.

On the other hand, the minority who cling stubbornly to the old creeds and assert their loyalty to the Bible have only made matters worse

by their blind zeal, since it is utterly impossible to defend convincingly the unscientific ideas and unreasonable doctrines which they falsely claim are taught in the Scriptures.

Because of the conflict between these two factions, the nominal church has lost its authority in the eyes of a critical and unbelieving world, and has become little more than a social organization working for the betterment of the community, utterly powerless to convict or to convince. The Bible is set aside as a matter of secondary interest.

By repudiating what it claimed to be its foundation (the Bible), nominal Christianity rejects the history and biography of its Founder, and becomes utterly leaderless. In fact, it places itself on a level with all pagan cults, wholly dependent upon human judgments and human ethical standards. For without the Bible, Christianity ceases to be true to its name. No substitute can be offered, and no compromise.

At the present time the accusers of the Bible seem victorious. But justice demands that the accused be given the benefit of the doubt, and be allowed to defend itself. If it fails to clear itself of the many and grave charges brought against it, let us by all means abandon it at once as unworthy of belief; but if it succeeds, let us "hear and say, It is truth" (Isa. 43:9).

We shall take the position that the Bible is as up-to-date, as reasonable, as accurate, as dependable, as open to analysis as any human science. We hold that as originally written, it contains not a single contradiction, absurdity, impossibility or error; that it agrees with nature and all true science. We assert that it goes even further and reveals in itself and by comparison with history and current events that it is of Divine origin. Nothing less than

▶ *As a civilization we have developed our material culture while neglecting our spiritual values.*

▶ *The Bible is as up-to-date, as reasonable, as accurate, as dependable, as open to analysis as any human science.*



► *The Bible outlines a definite plan by which a Superpower shall intervene and stop the avalanche of evil, and bring righteousness and peace worldwide.*

this position can satisfy us, as there is too much at stake. Either we have a trustworthy guide, or we are better off with no guide at all. If we admit one error, the value of the whole is destroyed; a chain is no stronger than its weakest link.

Our assertion, of course, is worthless without proof. In fact, one of the plainest commands in the Bible is, "Prove all things; hold fast that which is good" (1 Thess. 5:21). We believe that this can best be done by dealing directly with the accusations most frequently brought against the Bible. But it must be remembered that accusation requires far less time and space than defense; however, enough evidence will be given, we trust, to demonstrate to every honest mind the harmony, the purity, the justice, the intelligibility, and the Divine inspiration of this Book which is to us the only hope of life beyond—The Known Bible, the Word of God.

The Word of God outlines a plan, a definite plan by which a Superpower shall intervene and stop the avalanche of evil, and also repair the damage which has been wrought, until righteousness and peace shall fill the earth. Do we not have an interest in the spiritual and temporal welfare of the human race? Then let us not take away the restraining influence of the religion which, supported by ample evidence, can demonstrate positively that there is a just God, and that His Word is Divine, a sure foundation upon which to build. That which undermines faith and takes away from men and women the religion they have professed without giving them something better in its place is negative, destructive, demoralizing and dangerous.

All efforts to prove that the Bible is of Divine origin, that it is indeed an anchor which will hold through every storm, and that belief in its teachings allows the full exercise of reason and

the pursuit of all true science—such efforts are for the salvation of the human race and merit the careful attention and investigation of every honest mind.

### Acknowledgments

We wish to acknowledge our indebtedness to the various writers from whom we quote. Our purpose in quoting is to establish and confirm the truthfulness of the Scriptures. In many cases we have disagreed with and criticized the quotation. We believe the authors will readily grant that this is our privilege. Our disagreement, however, is not on the basis of personal likes or opinions, or upon a desire to be contentious, but upon a careful comparison with the Book of all books, the Bible.

Do not imagine that we think ourselves superior to the wisdom of our civilization; our confidence is in the Word of God, and that Word is superior, and what it reveals is above all, for God is wiser than all His creation.

Another important reason for many quotations is the fact that our faith in the Bible as an inspired Book rests heavily on fulfilled prophecy. The sacred Book outlines a plan covering the entire span of human history. Much of that plan is now already in the past, a fact which can be confirmed by comparisons with history. Much is also yet in the future; while the significant events of the present speak to us in no uncertain tones that the plan is indeed working out according to the Divine schedule.

Many books have been written purporting to foretell the future. How may we know the true from the false, the Divine from the human? Nearly thirty-five centuries ago this question was asked and answered by Moses, the law-giver of Israel: "And if thou say in thine heart, How shall we know the word which the Lord hath not spoken?



When a prophet speaketh in the name of the Lord, if the thing follow not, nor come to pass, that is the thing which the Lord hath not spoken, but the prophet hath spoken it presumptuously: thou shalt not be afraid of him" (Deut. 18:21-22). Jesus reaffirmed this simple but decisive test: "And now I have told you before it come to pass, that, when it is come to pass, ye might believe" (John 14:29).

We refer freely to the writings of historians both ecclesiastical and profane, who recorded events as they saw them; also to trained observers who recognize and are grappling with present-day problems. Our purpose is to show that events recorded and conditions existing today are parallel, the fulfillment of prophecies written long before the events could even have been considered possible. These writers have no affiliation with our organi-

zation. They are not influenced by Divine revelation; therefore their confirmation of the Scriptures is all the more weighty because wholly unintentional.

Our faith is thereby strengthened, and we are assured that the Bible is not of human origin but is the inspired Word of God, and that the remaining prophecies will be fulfilled in proper time.

To those who shrink in the bleak despair of unbelief, who desire a religion which is not blind to the facts and does not outrage reason, a religion completely divested of superstition and tradition, we trust that The Known Bible will come as a message of hope, a pole-star pointing to the haven of eternal rest.

*The Megiddo Church  
January, 1993*

## The BIBLE

*Study it carefully,  
Think of it prayerfully,  
Deep in thy heart let its pure precepts dwell;*

*Slight not its history,  
Ponder its mystery,  
None can e'er prize it too fondly or well.*

*Accept the glad tidings,  
The warnings and chidings,  
Contained in this Volume of heavenly lore;*

*With faith all unfailing,  
Divine love prevailing,  
Trust in its promise of life evermore.*

*With fervent devotion  
And thankful emotion  
Receive the blest welcome, respond to its call.*

*Life's purest oblation,  
The heart's adoration,  
Give to the Saviour, example to all.*

*May this Message of love  
From the Tribune above  
To all nations and various kindreds be given*

*Till God's children shall raise  
Joyous anthems of praise  
From earth's remote bounds to our Father in heaven.*

*Sweet peace shall then flow  
As the years onward go,  
With God's plan accomplished, the victory won;*

*No sickness or sorrow,  
No death in that morrow,  
God's will as in Heaven on earth e'er is done.*

*Go tell the sweet story  
Of gladness and glory  
To bathe earth in happiness through ages long;*

*No sinner to mar it,  
No power to bar it,  
But comfort and joy—life one long, happy song.*



# What About the Son?

## *A discussion of Hebrews 1:1-3*

**T**he book of Hebrews opens with a statement of the scope of God's work through the ages. "God, who at sundry times and in divers manners spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets" (Heb. 1:1). The author introduces Christ as God's special means of speaking to the people of "these last days," that is, the people of that final age, that present time. The Apostles thought of their age as "the last days" because during it they saw Christ, the fulfillment of the words of the ancient Prophets. Here was the first visible evidence of God's plan taking shape. Here was proof positive that God's kingdom would come and His will be done. The time of prophecy had ended, the time for fulfillment had begun.

The author also recognizes the many ways in which God had delivered His message to the Israelite fathers—"at sundry times and in divers manners." Some saw angels, others had visions. Some received their messages through direct revelation. But now, in "these last days," says the author, God has surpassed all His former means of communicating with His children by sending His own Son, "whom he hath appointed heir of all things." Christ is indeed "heir of all things," not that all things are yet within His power but He has them by promise. The entire earth is destined to come under His eternal authority and domain. He is the Lord who shall one day be King of the

whole earth (Zech. 14:9). He is the "heir" of the great promised inheritance, who "shall have dominion also from sea to sea, and from the river unto the ends of the earth" (Ps. 72:8).

The next phrase raises a question about Christ the Son: "by whom also he made the worlds." How could Jesus Christ, being raised up at the end of the prophetic period, be said to have "made the worlds"?

The original Greek word translated "worlds" in this text is *aionas*, which usually means "age," or in its plural form "ages." According to the Lexicon, it may refer to a very long time. It may also be used of a distinct segment of time, as a present age, or as time future, the age to come. It is used in Rom. 12:2 of the present age: "Be not conformed to this world." It is used in Luke 20:35 of the Messianic age: "But they which shall be accounted worthy to obtain that world," that age to come. It is used again in Eph. 2:7, where it is translated "ages": "That in the ages to come he might show the exceeding riches of his grace in his kindness toward us through Christ Jesus." There is no instance where the word was used to refer to the physical earth or the literal creation.

With these definitions in mind, we can read the passage with understanding: "By whom also he made the worlds"—not the physical creation but the "world to come whereof we speak" (Heb. 2:5), the coming age and



all that pertains to it, the time when Christ shall receive that to which He is heir.

A better translation of Hebrews 1:2 might read, "whom he (God) has appointed heir of all things pertaining to the earth, and unto whom he has entrusted the ages to come."

The next verse describes more of Christ's mission and glory: "Who being the brightness of his glory, and the express image of his person" (v. 3).

What are we to learn from the fact that Christ is "the express image" of God's "person"? Certainly not that God is a spirit, an ethereal being, but that He is substance, a "person," with "image." The word "express image" is defined as "impress, reproduction, representation; characteristic trait or manner, outward appearance." The word translated "person" means "substantial nature, essence, actual being, reality." The phrase might read: Christ bears the outward impress of God's substantial nature or actual being. The author is stressing the fact that God is a real being, not a spirit, as was commonly believed.

The author may also have been arguing for the reality of Christ and the reality of God against those who taught that Christ was only a spirit, and that God was likewise spirit rather than substance. He may also have been saying in effect that Christ obtained the effulgent radiance and the real physical being of His Father. The Father was just as real as the Son whom they had known.

God being the Supreme Ruler of the universes, we cannot profess too much knowledge of His physical likeness or appearance.

But we may safely say that God is a real being of substance, and that Christ was likewise real, being a representation of His Father. But we dare not venture too far in interpreting the author's words lest we find ourselves drawing unlikely conclusions in matters that are too great for us and which are not revealed.

The author goes on to extol Christ even more: "Who being the brightness of his glory, and... upholding all things by the word of his power, when he had by himself purged our sins, sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high."

How did Christ "by himself [purge] our sins"? This does indeed sound like Christ's sacrificial death on Calvary to take away the sins of mankind. But did the author of Hebrews believe this? No, for he says later, "Sacrifice and offering and burnt offerings and offering for sin thou wouldest not, neither hadst pleasure therein" (Heb. 10:8).

The words "by himself" and "our" are omitted in five of the best manuscripts. Without these words, the phrase reads, "when he had purged sins," or a better rendering, "after he had provided purification for sin." This Christ did. He purified Himself, just as we must purify ourselves (1 John 3:3). He provided the perfect example of how the work can be accomplished. And when this process of purification was complete, when His character had been polished to perfection, Christ was taken to heaven where He "sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high" (v. 3). This was the crowning reward for His years of self-denial and submission.

#### ◆ Heaven and Earth Not Everlasting?

*A passage in Psalm 102 sounds as though the earth and the heavens are impermanent, that they will one day disappear, that only God will endure forever. This does not agree with the idea that the earth abides forever. Could it be possible that some other heaven and earth (other than the natural creation) could be referred to in this verse?*

The passage in Psalm 102 seems definitely to refer to God the Creator. Verse 24 reads, "I said, O my God, take me not away in the midst of my days: thy years are throughout all generations." This statement could be addressed to none other than God the great Creator. Then follows the passage in question: "Of old hast thou laid the foundation of the earth: and the heavens are the work of thy hands. They shall perish, but thou shalt endure: yea, all of them shall wax old like a garment; as a vesture shalt thou change them, and they shall be changed: But thou art the same, and thy years shall have no end" (vs. 25-27).

We can also be quite certain of the application of this passage to God because of its being quoted in Hebrews 1, where the entire passage refers to God and speaks specifically of His creative ability. We read: "Thou, Lord, in the beginning hast laid the foundation of the earth; and the heavens are the works of thine hands. They shall perish; but thou remainest; and they all shall wax old as doth a garment; And as a vesture shalt thou fold them up, and they shall be changed: but thou art the same, and thy years



shall not fail" (Heb. 1:10-12). For this reason, with so direct a reference to God, we must look for some other explanation to remove the seeming contradiction. For without question, the earth and the heavens are permanent. "The earth abideth for ever" (Eccl. 1:4), and often the heavens and the earth are referred to as eternal, everlasting. Even the mountains are referred to as "the everlasting hills," and "so long as the sun and the moon endureth" is a phrase to describe the length of Christ's rule, which is elsewhere said to be eternal (Ps. 72:5).

What could be the thought intended in the passage in Ps. 102:25? Very possibly the problem is in the translation. While most of the translations read very similarly to the King James, a few are different. The American Translation injects the thought of a possibility, to point up the eternal nature of God. It reads "They may perish, but Thou wilt endure; all of them may wear out like a garment;

thou mayest change them like clothing and they will change; but Thou art always the same, and Thy years have no end" (Ps. 102:26, American Translation). The thought seems to be that even though they may perish, God is eternal—He is enduring beyond the most enduring part of His creation. It is a literary means of emphasizing the eternal nature of God, in contrast to the short span of human years. The Harrison Translation of "the Hebrew into current English" gives the same thought: "Though they perish, you will remain." But Jesus Himself made a similar statement when He said, "Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my words shall not pass away" (Matt. 24:35). He was not saying that heaven and earth would literally pass away but that His words were more eternal than the most enduring part of God's creation. It is an emphatic statement of an absolute truth. Similar statements occur in Isa. 51:6; Jer. 31:35; Mark 13:31; Luke 21:33. □



*My God! Let my faith be  
A living, growing thing in me  
That takes control of heart and hand  
And binds me to a loftier plan,  
That keeps me calm amid the strife,  
And trains me for a richer life;  
A life that sees beyond earth's woe  
To joys that only angels know;  
A life that tastes, e'en here, with Thee,  
The bliss of immortality.*





In the same degree that our mind is free from all unholy passion, in that same degree is it nearer to strength.

*Purge from our heart the stain so deep and  
Of wrath and pride and care;  
Send Thine own holy calm upon the soul,  
And bid it settle there.*

It is no great matter to be pleasant when associating with the good and gentle, with those who are naturally pleasing to us and best agree with us. But to be able to live peaceably with hard and perverse persons, or with such as go contrary to us, this is a great grace and a most commendable and godly thing. — *Selected.*

*For the Lord is righteous; He loves righteousness; the upright will behold his face"—Psalm 11:7, NAS*



## More and More Feeling

*(Continued from page 2)*

Then we must take the process one step further. We must actually change our appreciations, until we give personal endorsement to God's standards, until we own them as our own, until His will is our will, His thoughts our thoughts, His judgment our judgment.

Here is a high measure of spiritual attainment, but it all begins with becoming sensitive—sensitive to what God calls good, and equally sensitive to what He calls evil or sin. The more sensitive we are to sin, the quicker we will be able to identify a temptation. And the sooner we recognize what may tempt us, the more effectively we shall be able to control it—and overpower it.

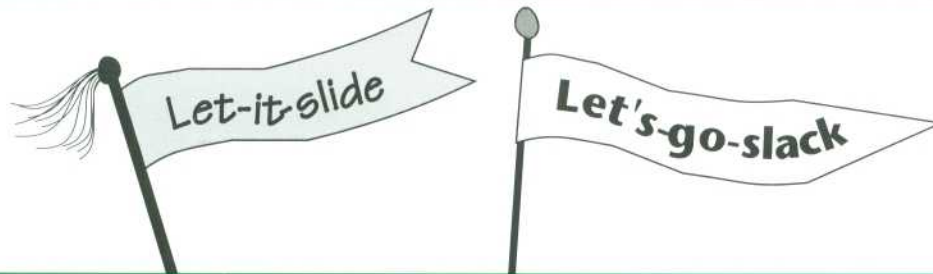
This special sensitivity will have one more positive effect: The Word of God will have new power with us, in us, and over us. One word from God will mean more to us than all the sayings of all the men in the world combined. God's promises will inspire us, His

laws will restrain us, His admonitions will correct us, and our obedience will be immediate. Whatever He says, there will be in us the instant reaction—because we will want above all else to please God. And when sin is near, we will feel it—dread it—hate it, because of our strong spiritual senses.

If we do not develop this strong sensitivity to the Divine, if the thought of God does not stir any emotional response within us, if we do not care enough for the things He offers to be captured by them, we will find one day that God does not care about us either. "Because I have called, and ye refused; I have stretched out my hand, and no man regarded; but ye have set at nought all my counsel, and would none of my reproof:...Then shall they call upon me, but I will not answer; they shall seek me early, but they shall not find me: For that they hated knowledge, and did not choose the fear of the Lord" (Prov. 1:24–25, 28–29).

O God, create in me a growing sensitivity to the things of the Spirit, lest I grow cold—and perceive it. □





## The Town of "Yawn"

*H*ave you heard of the town of "Yawn," my friend,  
On the banks of the river "Slow"?  
Where the "Wait-a-while" flower scents the air  
And the "Some-other-timers" grow?

*I*t lies in the valley of "What's-the-use"?  
In the province of "Let-it-slide";  
It is there that the weary "Put-it-offs"  
And the "I-don't-care's" reside.

*T*he weeds all around are called "Pass-the-blame,"  
And the "Plenty-of-time" grows free;  
Inducing a feeling of "It will do" –  
Sometime – in a day, or two.

*I*f you ever visit this town of "Yawn,"  
And its suburb of "Let's-go-slack,"  
Be certain you do not linger there –  
You may not ever get back!



–Author Unknown