



Megiddo Message

*"While daylight lasts
we must be busy with
the work of Him who sent Me:
soon night comes, when no one
can do any work" —Jesus.*

The Reality of Judgment

THE background against which the gospel of Christ must be preached is the certainty of individual responsibility and the reality of Judgment.

This is not a harsh analysis. It is a true one. There is nothing harsh in God's plan of salvation; it opens to mankind an opportunity beyond his fondest fathoming. It opens to him prospects so far surpassing his experience here that "Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him" (I Cor. 2:9).

But this same gospel brings with it accountability. If we are to merit such favor, we must prove ourselves responsible, self-governed, obedient individuals. We must prove that we can act responsibly toward one another and toward Him, because He *will* call us to account for what we have done. He *will* judge us for "the things done in his body, whether it be good or bad" (II Cor. 5:10). He will judge—and recompense.

This is no more than we should expect. What school graduates its people without thorough testing to see that they have met the standards? What training program places people in positions of responsibility without first being sure that they are competent? Who would assign any person to a place of responsibility without first being sure that that person is responsible?

No, the problem is not that we are dealing with a harsh God but that we are so slow to learn, so slow to believe, so slow to obey.

As we persist in our own ways, our hearts become hardened by unbelief, hardened by sin, hardened by hypocrisy, hardened by willful disobedience. In spite of this, God in His absolute fairness continues to extend His mercy, for He is "merciful and gracious, slow to anger, and plenteous in mercy" (Ps. 103:8). He is patiently waiting, "not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance" (II Peter 3:9).

God's long-suffering and patience are seen in his repeated warnings of the approaching disaster. By experience we know that we have only ourselves to blame if we disregard the signs along our highways and find ourselves involved in tragedy. How much more should we listen to God's warnings!

This theme of warning is found all through the Bible. A warning shows fairness by telling what lies ahead.

Implicit in every warning is an alternative. In the multiplied warnings God has given us lie the alternatives of life or death.

God has extended His mercy far beyond what we have deserved. We still live in that day when we can either reject or accept His message. Today He warns, and warns, and warns, but He will not always warn.

Looming on the horizon is the certainty of the inexorable Day of Judgment. It is the certainty of God's judgment on sin. "Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap. For he that soweth to his flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption; but he that soweth to the Spirit shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting" (Gal. 6:7-8).

Confronted with this certainty of coming judgment, what shall we do?

As far as concerns our relationship to those outside God's plan, we must be prepared to take ridicule, even persecution, if necessary. We must recognize that by God's grace we are different from others, and that we must stay that way.

Then the Christian must, as the apostle Paul said to Timothy, "never lose [his] sense of urgency, in season or out of season" (II Tim. 4:2, Phillips). He must face the fact that the prophecy has been fulfilled, the time has already come when they will no longer "endure sound teaching, but having itching ears they will accumulate for themselves teachers to suit their own likings, and will turn away from listening to the truth and wander into myths" (II Tim. 4:3-4, RSV).

Above all, we must live ever closer to our Lord by making full use of the means He has provided—prayer, the study of God's Word, and daily application of what we have learned from Him.

Then, a Christian must *endure*; he must learn to "take his share of suffering as a good soldier of Jesus Christ" (II Tim. 2:3). He must take to heart the apostle Paul's admonition, to be "blameless and harmless [innocent], the sons of God, without rebuke in the midst of a crooked and perverse nation, among whom ye shine as lights in the world" (Phil. 2:15).

If doing this, the reality of coming judgment will be to us the reality of glory, honor, and immortality—eternal life!

Megiddo means

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

We believe

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

We believe

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

We believe

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

We believe

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

We believe

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

We believe

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

We believe

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

Bible quotations

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

NEB—*New English Bible*

NIV—*New International Version*

NAS—*New American Standard*

RSV—*Revised Standard Version*

TLB—*The Living Bible*

TEV—*Today's English Version*

JB—*The Jerusalem Bible, Reader's Edition*

Phillips—*The New Testament in Modern English*

The use of selected references from various versions of the Bible does not necessarily imply publisher endorsement of the versions in their entirety.

About Our Cover...

For our cover photograph we are indebted to the kindness of D. C. Lowe, who resides in Oregon. The photograph is a sunset behind a juniper tree, Bend, Oregon.

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

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

Spiritual Discernment

Scripture Reading: Hebrews 5:11-14

EYESIGHT is to the body what discernment is to the Christian. It is light, health, and stability, and brings into view a whole world of spiritual possibility.

Or, using another simile, we might say that spiritual discernment is to the Christian what a good root system is to the tree—strength, foundation, nourishment, health, and well-being. By it we are able to judge between truth and error, right and wrong, good and evil. By it we are able to recognize the difference between that which is soul-building, and that which is soul-depleting. There is no such thing as Christianity without Christian discernment.

Are we right in making such judgments when Jesus said, "Judge not that ye be not judged"? (Matt. 7:1). From this text, many people mistakenly draw the conclusion that Jesus was prohibiting any and every kind of judgment. Whoever follows Christ, they feel, must not have any built-in prejudices against certain types of conduct or lifestyles. To assert solidly formed principles or convictions about life—or, more especially, about people—is to be superior, proud, and un-Christ-like. They frown on anyone striving to be "above" another in level of conduct, upholding a "God loves-everybody-we-should-love-everybody-too" doctrine.

However, can this be Jesus' intention—when we find Jesus Himself so outspoken and so definite on matters of principle, of right and of wrong? Do we find any slight evidence that Jesus preferred to compromise with error than to correct it, that He would rather agree than offend, whatever the issue? Was His the easy-going, love-everybody philosophy that avoided passing judgment on anything or anyone?

What about the time He drove the moneychangers from the temple—did He not "judge" them? And what about those excoriating words He pronounced against the pretenders of righteousness, who paid "tithes of mint, and anise, and cummin, and [omitted] the weightier matters of the law, judgment, mercy and faith"? When He pronounced a "Woe" upon them and called them "whited sepulchres," "serpents," and "hypocrites," was He not "judging" them?

Didn't He judge even those whom He chose to be with Him, His disciples? On several occasions He rebuked them—for their lack of faith, their lack of humility, their indecision, their waywardness. Was He afraid to judge? We know He was not.

Someone says, "But we are not Jesus." Truly, we are not, and with our more limited perspective and limited authority we are not wise in interfering with matters beyond our realm of influence or concern. We are not commissioned to tell our government, our city officials or even our neighbors what they should do. But this does not mean we are to be wishy-washy or have no solid convictions of right and wrong. In our own lives the law of Christ must be supreme, lest we condemn ourselves by the things we allow ourselves to do. In our own lives we must not countenance any evil thing, nor should we allow ourselves liberties which make occasion to our lower nature. Jesus Himself set the standard, and it is our duty to uphold it.

Jesus said, "If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow me" (Luke 9:23). He might well have added, "If any man will come after me, let him develop his powers of spiritual discernment to the utmost," for none of us can be truly His disciples without His convictions, His principles, and His laws applied in our own lives. How can we do less when our eternal salvation depends on it? How else can we learn to follow Him, to speak His

Note: *Spiritual Discernment* is available as a complete church service on cassette. Price: \$3.00

words, to follow His example? In any situation of our lives we must be able to ask ourselves, "What would Jesus do?" and reply—and do—as Jesus would have. Only spiritual discernment makes this possible.

Understanding "Judge Not"

In Matthew 7:6 Jesus presents a teaching that is particularly offensive in this day of tolerance and non-discrimination. He is addressing a special angle of spiritual discernment, and the sooner we develop it, the better for us. It is this: to realize that the true faith is not for everyone and should not be forced upon those who do not want it.

It is a characteristic of the Christian religion that most of its doctrines are totally unacceptable to the natural man. Or to put it another way, most of what the Bible teaches is offensive. It is not "after man," "by" man, nor was it formulated to "please man."

When Jesus preached, many of the religious people of the day were offended. They disliked His teaching. They loved their old ways and opposed His. There was a reason for this.

The words of Christ in Matthew 7:6 may even sound hard and unfeeling. In the previous verses, Jesus had been talking of proper and improper judgment. Christians must not judge one another hypocritically. But then He adds, as if to correct the possible impression that a follower of Christ is barred from judging at all, "Give not that which is holy unto the dogs, neither cast ye your pearls before swine, lest they trample them under their feet, and turn again and rend you."

To most people, this verse implies the worst kind of intolerance or prejudice. While it does not actually teach prejudice, it does teach the need for the utmost spiritual discernment and proper discrimination on the part of Christians. In the simplest of terms, it means that there are some persons with whom Christ's followers cannot and must not share spiritual truth.

Now there is something about this that goes against the highly permissive spirit of our age. And for this reason, if for no other, it is necessary to place the teaching in the spectrum of Biblical truth and evaluate it carefully.

What is the context of this verse? Quite clearly it is the teaching that some, but not all men, will be saved. And that among those who will not be saved will always be some who are actively opposed to God's truth—so much so that the Christian should have no dealings with them.

Jesus spoke a similar truth on other occasions. In Matthew 15:14, He said of the Pharisees, "Let them alone: they be blind leaders of the blind. And if the

Are we right in making such judgments when Jesus said, "Judge not that ye be not judged"?

blind lead the blind, both shall fall into the ditch." A straightforward statement of fact. In other words, there were people beyond hope or help. The apostle John, who is noted for his great emphasis on love, nevertheless said that if anyone should come preaching a gospel contrary to the true teaching of Christ, he should not be accepted into the fellowship of the church. John writes, "If there come any unto you, and bring not this doctrine, receive him not into your house, neither bid him God speed: for he that biddeth him God speed is partaker of his evil deeds" (II John 10, 11).

Jude wrote, "And of some have compassion, making a difference" (Jude 22). That is discrimination.

Malachi wrote: "Then shall ye return, and discern between the righteous and the wicked, between him that serveth God and him that serveth him not" (Mal. 3:18).

The Psalmist wrote: "He that worketh deceit shall not dwell within my house: he that telleth lies shall not tarry in my sight" (Ps. 101:7). Discrimination again, clearly. But does not the Lord have the right to discriminate when He is selecting those He will eternally bless?

Jeremiah wrote of his separateness: "I sat not in the assembly of the mockers, nor rejoiced; I sat alone because of thy hand" (Jer. 15:17).

Paul added, "As we have said before, so say I now again, If any man preach any other gospel unto you than that ye have received, let him be accursed." He did not say, "Let your differences be overlooked—it doesn't really matter what you believe." No, absolutely no. What we believe *does* matter.

In the light of these texts, it is obvious that Christ's call for discernment is not so out of place as it seems. It calls us to the stern duties of discipline and understanding in the task of advancing God's claims through the gospel.

Pearls Before Swine

What does this statement, "Give not that which is holy unto the dogs," mean? What does it have to do with you, and me, and the church of Jesus Christ generally? First, it means that all of the

truth of the Bible is not for the unbeliever. Nor should we present His truths to those who do not wish to hear them, lest with their smattering of knowledge they do more harm than good—lest “they turn again and rend you.”

It is the duty of every possessor of the great things of God's law to guard well the sacred treasures in his charge and handle them as the choicest of jewels. No casual handling as of ordinary wares; for they are choicest treasure, to be handled with all due respect. This is a matter requiring discernment.

But spiritual discernment includes more than this. Because our Christian commitment is so far-reaching, our personal need for spiritual discernment is broad, as broad as our lives. If we would be truly Christlike and eligible to share the limitless blessings of eternity, we must train and discipline our powers of discernment and perception in every area of our lives, even our

judgments, our attitudes, our feelings, our motives. All must be influenced and directed by our knowledge of God and what He requires of us. Should it not be so? For what is more vital than that which affects—and ultimately will determine—our eternal existence?

This is why James wrote to his brethren in these words: “Who is a wise man and endued with knowledge among you? Let him show out of a good conversation his works with meekness of wisdom” (James 3:13).

Discernment Needed

The great apostle Paul describes the need for discernment in these words: “For 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” (Rom. 8:5). Again he wrote, “But the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him:

Let Us Pray . . .

Gracious heavenly Father, from whom all goodness flows, all light emanates, and all life proceeds; we come before Thee this morning thanking Thee for the multitude of blessings that have crowned our lives: for each friendship that brightens, for hope that lightens, for love, discipline and affection that make life worthwhile. Thy goodness so far surpasses anything we have deserved. With steadiness of attention, with deep resolve of heart and clarity of thought, enable us to be edified in this Thy house of worship.

Of ourselves, our Lord, we pray in the tenor and tone of a minor key: not for what we fail to have, but for what we have too often failed to do with what we have; not for lack of opportunity, but for our lack of persistent courage in making those opportunities count; not for any need of provisions for this life but for the selfish spirit that too often makes discord in our lives. Turn us, we pray, from the dissonance of selfishness to a full harmony of prayer, praise, and service. And as we turn, Father, forgive.

Lord, we come to learn of Thee; and in learning of Thee to learn of ourselves and how we must be remade to be accepted by Thee. We long to please Thee in all our ways. But we know that before we can please Thee we must develop that fine and holy quality of spiritual

discernment, that educated conscience that can think Thy thoughts, and judge as Thou wouldst judge; that can know the difference between what Thou dost love and what Thou dost despise.

O Lord, we long to be Thy true servants, to offer Thee the sacrifices Thou dost love, to live as Thine own sons and daughters. Give us the discernment to choose wisely in all our ways, never calling evil good or sacrificing the best for that which is even slightly inferior. Help us to be rigorous in the standard we require in our own lives, allowing ourselves no liberty whatever in anything Thou dost forbid but demanding of ourselves that highest quality of which we are capable, that full dedication that honors Thee in all its ways.

Lord, as we become more and more discerning, cause us to probe beneath the smooth surface of our lives, to suspicion ourselves of conduct which Thou canst not approve; and when we find in our hearts any questionable intent, any motive of selfishness or pride, any thought or attitude not to Thy honor and our spiritual upbuilding, help us immediately to take corrective action and amend our ways.

We pray Thee to go with us through all the vicissitudes of life, and uphold us with Thy spirit. Bless each one according to our needs and Thy will, and accept our thanks for Thy manifold mercies. Be near to help and quicken us in our service. And may our convictions guide our conduct, may our faith kindle our love, and may our love be bubbling up and overflowing, that all whom we meet may recognize that we belong to Thee. For our coming King and His glorious eternal Kingdom we pray. Amen.

neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned. But he that is spiritual judgeth all things. . . ." (I Cor. 2:14-15).

For this very reason God has given us the faculties of reason, intellect, and the ability to learn and relate experience to learning. He wants us to think, to know what we are doing with our lives, and why. He has no intention that we be robots, mindless creatures that will do anything they are told without conscious thought or intelligent decision.

Because He has so equipped us, He has given us His Word and the means by which we may apply it. Every situation of life is not specifically addressed, but through the centuries it has proven itself, again in the words of the Great Apostle, a "thorough furnisher unto all good works"—it *has* the answers. Knowing its principles and its precepts, we are able to discern. Always there is a principle to apply, an example to parallel, a life to emulate. As the apostle Paul again admonished: "Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus" (Phil. 2:5); or as he told his brethren, ". . . we have the mind of Christ" (I Cor. 2:16).

Discernment: The Mind of Christ

To have the mind of Christ is impossible without a well-developed sense of Christian discernment. We do not naturally have the mind of Christ. We do not naturally think as He would have us think, or choose as He would choose for us. And the developing of Christian discernment requires time, effort, diligence and application.

So inseparable is Christian discernment from Christian living that it exists in some degree even before we know the way of Christ. The man or woman who is attracted by the call of God has instinctively superior powers of discernment. So discerning are they that this world does not satisfy them. They have surveyed the present arrangement and they want something more, something better, something lasting. That is why they listen; that is why they respond. They are discerning, choosing, seeking.

Discerning Correct Belief

Then, as soon as we decide to concern ourselves with the plan of God, another area requiring discernment is encountered. It is in the area of determining correct belief. We find, if we go shopping for religion, that the varieties on the market are almost infinite. One can buy just about anything he wishes to swallow. The prices vary too, from religions that demand almost nothing to those which demand everything. The range of the benefits is just as broad—if not broader. The

In any situation of our lives we must ask ourselves, "What would Jesus do?"

whole question is, What are my requirements? What do I want from my religion?

If we want religion that can perpetuate our existence—and nothing less is worth considering—then there is only one source for our knowledge: the Bible. But here again we face another situation requiring all our powers of discernment; for we find that if we limit our acceptance to that which answers to the Apostle's "Prove all things, hold fast that which is good," we cannot follow the popular trends of belief.

Nevertheless, each tenet of our faith must pass the test. God does not ask us to believe without evidence, but He does expect us to recognize evidence when we see it, and to be able to separate genuine evidence from that which is spurious.

Discernment in Living

Then, once we have "received the word with all readiness of mind," we need discernment again to rise to the standards of our faith, to apply what we have learned. We must come to know the difference between what God calls "right" and what He calls "wrong."

The author of the book of Hebrews spoke meaningfully of this need as he wrote to his brethren. Apparently there were some among them who had not developed this superior virtue of discernment. We read: ". . . ye are dull of hearing. For when for the time ye ought to be teachers, ye have need that one teach you again which be the first principles of the oracles of God; and are become such as have need of milk, and not of strong meat. For every one that useth milk is unskillful in the word of righteousness: for he is a babe. But strong meat belongeth to them that are of full age, even those who by reason of use have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil" (Heb. 5:11-14).

It is a passage that makes us uncomfortable. We do not naturally know all we might like to *think* we know. We must learn. We must train ourselves. Faith must be put to the test by everyday application. That which is learned in the holy place must be lived in the marketplace. To do this we need Christian discernment.

If we would be truly Christlike, we must discipline our powers of discernment in every area of our lives.

Discernment comes with maturity. And mature we must. We cannot always be children, depending on someone else to set the standard, having someone over us tell us what to do. We must learn to distinguish between good and evil for ourselves. And how do we learn this? Just as we learn any other art, or science or skill: by practice, by "having our senses exercised to discern." Growth in Christian experience must mean a growing moral sensitiveness to right and wrong, not unlike the skilled eye of the artist or the practiced ear of the musician.

Children do not instinctively know the difference between right and wrong. They must be told. Again and again it must be explained to them until slowly a consciousness awakens in them. Just so with each of us. We must learn, we must study, we must apply what we learn. We must get beyond our spiritual ABC's and become "skillful in the word of righteousness." We must grow, becoming morally and spiritually discerning, so that every minor question is not a major issue. More and more sensitive must we become to what is right and what is wrong. By what we know from the Word of God, what we learn from our own experience, and what we learn from the experiences of others, we can develop an educated conscience that will be able to carry us safely through times of crisis.

Conscience: Exercised "Senses"

Conscience is not an instinctive, infallible guide, but it can be a useful instrument when sharpened by proper training, by careful practice, by growing understanding, and by the realization that those we honor and respect are governed by the same standards.

What is this special task of exercising our senses? How is it accomplished?

To the beginner, discerning "between good and evil" might seem like a relatively easy and straightforward matter. Does not the law of God say, "Thou shalt" or "Thou shalt not"? And should not that settle the matter? However, all the answers are not always obvious, nor are the lines clearly drawn—even for one

who has had many years of experience in the ways of the Lord. Truly, some matters *are* easy to judge. We know we must not lose our tempers; we must not waste our time in meaningless pastimes; we must not let our moods and our emotions dominate us; we must not lie, or deceive, or take what does not belong to us; and so on and on. But knowing exactly what to do even in *these* matters often requires spiritual discernment. Again and again we must exercise our powers of discernment.

A Personal Discernment Test

There are difficult questions of everyday life that must be answered, those so-called "gray" areas where we must decide what is right in a particular situation. If we think seriously about our Christian obligations, we realize there are many areas which need our finest powers of spiritual discernment.

Let us each evaluate ourselves: How do I stand? How sharp and developed is my spiritual discernment? Perhaps we can help ourselves to an answer by asking ourselves questions along such lines as these:

- I feel a need to be informed about what is going on in the world about me. I know that as a Christian I must use my time to the glory of God. How much time can I use to read the newspaper and still spend my time to the glory of God?
- As a Christian, I want to devote myself—as far as possible—to the work of the Lord. Just how should that be defined? What does God ask of me? How much time, effort and money should I contribute to His cause, and how much should I retain to be able to support myself and meet my own needs honorably?
- I realize that as a Christian I should be obeying the command to write the law of God in my mind. Amid the daily duties of my life, I find I do not have time for everything I would like to do. How much time should I give to prayer, to Bible study, or to committing to memory favorite—and useful—passages of Scripture?
- How much time and effort should I give to missionary work and helping others?
- How should I use my "spare" time? I know I do not want to engage in idle pastimes which are not to the glory of God, but how about the things I allow myself to read, or think about, or do in moments of leisure? Are they always the best? Are they always God-honoring?
- What is wise to do in the matter of seeking employment? What should I put first—the extra income

that a promotion might give me, or the advantages of less responsibility and more time for spiritual interests that I can enjoy in my present position?

- Again I am reminded of my duty to use my time wisely. I have two conflicting commitments, one directly involving my duty to the church, the other a seemingly necessary secular obligation. Which shall I cancel—and which shall I carry out?
- I feel a need for diversion. I know that as a Christian I am responsible for this also. What can I do that will be both a diversion and a spiritual uplift?
- There is a purchase I would like to make. I know that as a Christian I must spend my money wisely, realizing that it is not mine but only a trust for the use of which I shall have to give account. Why am I making this purchase—is it the best decision I could make? Is it for some practical advantage, or is there underlying some desire to be up with the “Joneses”?
- How much time and effort shall I devote to talking with others about the hope that inflames my heart?
- Whom should I choose for my friend? one who lets me know the facts about myself just as they are—without any paint or polish—or one who is careful never to hurt my feelings and always gives me the benefit of the doubt?
- These are matters which require careful discernment, if we would be faithful to our high calling. And sometimes—oftentimes—we may find it helpful to consult a trusted spiritual advisor. In the words of the Wise Man of Israel, “Two are better than one.”

Again, it might be that we need to exercise our senses of discernment in answering questions that concern our own inner growth and character development, questions such as these:

- How rigid should I be with my own self-discipline? How much liberty should I give myself in the “little things” I allow myself to do—the little “extras” of life that I indulge—and still remain in the narrow way to life?
- How about a situation in which, as someone has said, even an angel would lose his temper? Can’t my impatience have even a little allowance at such a time (though I realize an angel never lost his temper)?
- The Bible says “Lie not one to another.” How far must I carry this? When I survey my own life, I find there are times when I have colored a story I related—just a little bit, to make it more interesting. Strictly speaking, this is forbidden.
- How far must I go in obeying Jesus’ words, “All

Growth in Christian experience must mean a growing moral sensitiveness to right and wrong.

things whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them”? Sometimes it seems I must say something harsh, or sarcastic, or bitter—would I like such words said to me?

- Again, the Bible says “Do good unto all men.” Does this really mean *all*, even someone I happen not to like very well?
- Then we read, “Come out from among them, and be ye separate.” Just how far must I go in this—and still be obeying the command, “Let your light so shine before men”? I know I must come out from among them in dress and deportment, but how about those little words and expressions so typical of the modern age?
- I know that I must not “love them that hate the Lord.” But to what extent should I present my faith and conviction to former friends and acquaintances in the hope of influencing them with my own convictions—especially when I sense there is danger of my being drawn back into their company?
- How much correspondence should I carry on with those of my family who do not share my faith? Naturally, I want them to share my faith; but if they will not, what then?
- I happen to be short-fused, as they say it today, if things do not go my way. As a Christian I realize that I must control my temper. I find, however, that I must be continually on guard or I speak before I think. What is the most effective strategy to use in conquering my quick temper?
- Or, I am easily hurt, and often speak when I should refrain from speaking. How can I know which is the better course, both for myself and for others? How can I “taste” my words in advance, so that I can know when they will be helpful to another, and when they will prove a hindrance?
- I realize that I am naturally a self-centered person. I like pleasing “me” better than just about anything I can think of. What can I do for others—that might not be of particular interest to me—that might help me become less self-centered and selfish?

- I am the type that always has "something to say." Should I offer my suggestions on a given question, or remain silent? And how should I feel toward others whose opinions happen to differ from mine? Can I tell the difference between what is a matter of principle, and how much is merely opinion?
- How should I feel toward a brother or sister who has injured me? How should I react? How can I conquer my natural instinct to pay back evil for evil? Better yet, how can I conquer the tendency to sensitivity so that I will not be hurt?
- What should be my criteria for extending forgiveness to a brother or sister who asks it? Am I required to go to the extent Jesus said—and forgive "until seventy times seven"—even when it seems that person is not doing his or her best to prevent making the same mistake again?

Often the answer to our question lies in where we should draw the even finer line—not necessarily between right and wrong but between better and best. There are just countless questions in this area. The questions vary according to one's stage in life, but each of us, however young or old, has great need to exercise our senses.

As we look deeper, deeper and still deeper into the matter of spiritual discernment, we find it reaches even to the thoughts and intents of our hearts, our *own* hearts. Real spiritual discernment is necessary if we would give an honest answer to questions like these:

- What motivated me to speak as I did to that brother or sister?
- Why did I get hurt when someone spoke to me?
- Why was I offended when I found I was not chosen . . . ?
- How *should* I have reacted when I learned of such and such . . . ?
- What did I do that might have been misunderstood by another, that might have discouraged or disheartened another?
- How was my influence today—what attitude did I convey by the tone of my voice? by the radiance, or lack of radiance, on my face? Was I positive and buoyant? Or was there a bit of indecision and lack of conviction lurking in my own heart?
- How did I feel about so and-so's misconduct? Was there any tinge of gladness in me when they went wrong? God forbid!
- When someone disappointed me, why was I disturbed? Was it because of their spiritual failure—or because of a greater failure on my own part? Or was I disturbed because God's cause had been hindered?

- How conscious am I of the interests of God and His Kingdom? What place do they occupy in my thinking?
- How intense is my desire for the New World? How ever-present? How motivating a force is this desire in my life?
- What am I holding against a certain person? Remember that he who holds grudges hurts himself, not the person against whom he holds them.

The apostle Paul had a name for all this. He called it "approving things that are excellent," being "sincere and without offense until the day of Christ" (Phil. 1:9-10). Or as rendered in the New English Bible, "This is my prayer, that your love may grow ever richer and richer in knowledge and insight of every kind, and may thus bring you the gift of true discrimination. Then on the Day of Christ you will be flawless and without blame, reaping the full harvest of righteousness that comes through Jesus Christ." True discrimination, true discernment, "knowledge and insight of every kind"—this is our need.

Let us work harder to acquire this true discrimination, this spiritual discernment in our own lives, that it may be for us the key to everything beyond this world—even life, abundant and eternal, in the "everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ." MM

Announcing Abib

THE SACRED New Year and Abib is approaching once again. The new moon following the March equinox occurs this year on April 1. Accordingly, our annual observance of Abib First will begin the evening of Sunday, April 1 and continue through Monday, April 2, Bible time being measured from evening to evening (Lev. 23:32).

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

The anniversary of Christ's New Passover this year (Abib 13) will occur the evening of April 14, followed by the anniversary of His Resurrection on the morning of April 16.

Plan now to join us during this sacred season.

And Still She Speaks

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



Watch your conversation to make it as "becometh the gospel of Christ." If you just keep that in mind all the time wherever you are, whatever the circumstance, whatever you are doing, whether you are working or resting, whatever—"Only let your conversation be as it becometh the gospel of Christ." Just keep that testimony in mind, and it will have a controlling influence upon your mind.

The apostle Paul wants us to be determined that we are going to war against the natural desires, the fleshly mind, that we are going to bring self into subjection. We need to have one mind in this warfare against evil, one mind in our effort to rule and govern self, govern our temper, govern our tongue. Then our conversation will be such as "becometh the gospel of Christ." Oh, I wish we could all remember that all the time.

"Let nothing be done through strife or vainglory;"—oh, that is just a wonderful command to obey. That is perfection of character, you might say. Do not glory in self, glory in this, glory in that. Have a humble mind, a humble disposition.

Never say anything to enrage another. Remember, "A soft answer turneth away wrath: but grievous words stir up anger." Pour oil on the troubled waters, never say anything just for the purpose of antagonizing someone. Use words of kindness instead.

Men and women naturally glory in what they have done. We cannot glory in this, but only in the truth of God. We must learn that we are nothing naturally, of no eternal value, until we are made over into new creatures. What can we glory in? Glory in conquering our own dispositions.

We want to learn to investigate, look over the evidence before we judge. We are naturally so positive, so sure we are right, even before we see the evidence.

We ought to consider before we answer. How much trouble that would save.

We naturally do not see ourselves. And until we get our eyes open to this wonderful truth, we think we are all right. All the ways of a man are clean in his own eyes; but the Lord weighs the spirits; He knows what we are in His balance.

If we allow it to, this Word of God will discern the thoughts and intents of the heart and show us our weak points, where we need to build up, where we need to put away the wrong thoughts. We need to let the light of God's law search our heart.

Those who love life will watch their words to see if they are right in the sight of God. Every day we are talking of something. When we get so watchful that every time we speak we rule our tongue, speak the right thing at the right time, how much trouble it will save. What trouble it would save in the world if everyone would rule the tongue; if always they would think, "what will be the consequences?"—whatever the words! It is something we should keep in our mind continually.

It is so easy to slumber, pass the time away doing as we please. But remember what the prophet Isaiah said, that if we honor God by not doing our own ways, or finding our own pleasures, or speaking our own words, then He will cause us to ride upon the high places of the earth. We will be given glory and honor in that coming Day if we obey now.

Forgetters

IT IS Egypt, that rich and pagan land of darkness. Yonder the deep, dark waters of the river Nile glide silently toward the great sea. Here is the land of Goshen. Yet, listen! Does a pitiful sound reach your ears? Those Egyptians passing give no heed. It is but the weary moaning of Israelite slaves, groaning under a burden almost too heavy for human souls to bear. For well over three hundred years that sound has ascended heavenward. "Oh, for a deliverer! Oh, that the Lord would look down upon us and deliver us from our bondage!" Again and again they utter that mournful cry.

Time passes.

On and on the motley multitude trudge across the dry and barren sands of the wilderness of Etham. Walking is healthful, but arduous beneath the burning rays of this desert sun. Oh, for a good cool drink of water!

Where is that song that three days ago rang so triumphantly across this arid wasteland as Miriam the Prophetess, the sister of Aaron, took a timbrel in her hand and all the women went out after her with timbrels, and the whole congregation sang:

*"The Lord is my strength and song,
And he is become my salvation:
He is my God. . . .
Who is like unto thee, O Lord, among the gods?
Who is like thee, glorious in holiness,
Fearful in praises, doing wonders?"*

Now the timbrels are silent. On they trudge as that burning sun sinks slowly to the western horizon. Oh that they were back in Egypt! Now they would be turning their steps homeward to cool waters, food and sweet rest. With increasing frequency does that picture of the now distant Nile rise before their eyes. Never had the waters of Egypt seemed so inviting.

At long last the march comes to a halt before a spring of water, and the people clamor for an opportunity to quench their thirst. Then, the news breaks forth: the waters are bitter! Now everything is forgotten which only a short while ago seemed so unforgettable,

and the whole congregation lift their voice and murmur against Moses.

The story of that journey through the wilderness is the checkered story of a people blessed immeasurably, but who never seemed to be able to remember that fact from one moment to the next. In all the forty years spent in that barren, rocky region they wanted for none of the necessities of life. Not one in that vast multitude ever perished for lack of food or water, nor from physical fatigue. Too, Moses was with them. Moses, who had gone down into Egypt and liberated them from bondage, was leading them toward the Promised Land with all the love and patience of a spiritual father. Yet one day that congregation would be singing and praising God, and only a few days later crying, "Would to God we had died by the hand of the Lord in the land of Egypt, when we sat by the flesh pots, and when we did eat bread to the full; for ye have brought us forth into this wilderness to kill this whole congregation with hunger!" How many, many times they forgot their blessings and murmured against their leader.

At the Judgment seat of Christ, all the forgetters are going to be passed to the left. Nor will all of them be Israelite slaves. Kings will be there among that number, a Saul, a Solomon, a Joash. Many a long-and-sanctimonious-faced priest will be there. Every age had its forgetters. Prophets and sages cried long and loud against them, but they would not listen. The people in Jeremiah's day evidently were habitual forgetters, for he said, "My people have forgotten me days without number" (Jer. 2:32).

How deplorable this condition! for when we forget God He will forget us, as we are told in Hosea 4:6, "Seeing thou hast forgotten the law of thy God, I will also forget thy children."

To forget the Lord is to forget His law, and when we do this we show that we no longer love Him. In our daily tasks, if we love to do a certain thing we do not usually forget to do it. So in the divine life, if we love God we will not forget to do as He has commanded. The Wise Man admonishes, "My son, forget not my law; but let thine heart keep my commandments" (Prov. 3:1).

What excuse will these audacious forgetters have in the day of Judgment? Think you that they will be able to stand up before the Lord, look Him straight in the eye and declare that the reason they were unfaithful was because their memories were so poor that they could not remember what He told them to do? Never! In that day they will recall to their sorrow—and that without any miraculous assistance—the truths which, if remembered and applied, could have been their salva-

tion. Even Moses warned of the danger of forgetting: "... beware lest thou forget the Lord which brought thee forth out of the land of Egypt."

Strangely enough, a poor memory is nowhere among the causes of this forgetfulness. Jesus goes to the root of the matter in the Parable of the Sower. It is the adversary from without, temptations from within, the cares and pleasures of this life, and the deceitfulness of riches, that choke out the word of truth.

Paul, the great Apostle, told us the things we should forget; and he himself was an outstanding example in this respect. He says in Philippians 3:13-14, "Brethren, I count not myself to have apprehended: but this one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before, I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus."

Too often our problem is that the foreground of our mind is so cluttered with the things we ought to be forgetting that the things we ought to remember get pushed far to the rear—simply because there

just isn't any more room up front.

How can we expect God's saving law to make any impression on our minds when we are constantly crowding it out with thinking of endless details and trivialities, brooding over hurt feelings and grievances, and remembering the things we did away back in Egypt before entering the narrow way? A poor memory is, in nine cases out of ten, not so much a poor memory at all but lack of appreciation of this priceless treasure entrusted to us.

The solution? Clean house. Make room for the thoughts that are true, honest, just, pure, lovely, and of good report. Give them a hearty welcome and a comfortable place up front, and just see if they do not stay there.

If we practice to remember to keep the law of God, we shall find in the Day of Judgment that He will not be unrighteous to forget our work and labor of love but will reward us according to our works.

The work is great and the reward is sure. Let us work not to be forgetful hearers but to remember His commandments to do them. MM

Danger: Idols

WE MUST not and cannot be like the Jews in Jeremiah's day, who exchanged the glory of God for that which was no glory, for gods who were no gods, phantoms, vanity, nothing.

How wonderfully God has preserved the living Word for us, with lessons by the score, of instruction, direction, redirection and warning, that we may through patience and comfort of the Scriptures have hope.

In our day there is no danger of Baal worship but there is great danger of setting up our own idols in our heart and exalting them above God. This is an easy going, pleasure loving age, a modern scientific age with many attractions to take up one's interests more than necessary and exclude God. There are not many examples around us to inspire and encourage, and one must hold on tenaciously to the faith of his fathers, lest the teachings of our God become secondary and be set aside.

May God help us to never grow weary in well doing, for in due season we shall reap if we faint not. What a reward awaits us if faithful! (I Cor. 2:9).

—Contributed

Self Denial Week

THE WEEK beginning Sunday, February 5, will be the annual observance of self-denial week for the Megiddo Church congregation and all scattered members and friends who wish to observe it with us.

During this week we will limit ourselves to three articles of food at each meal. Selection will be made from simple, plain, common foods, varied each meal as desired. We shall refrain from all specialties, all cookies, pastries, desserts, and fancy foods. We will think of our need rather than our desire.

In observing this week, we will be following the pattern set by God's people in all ages. The Christian life is a life of discipline and self-control, and if we cannot deny ourselves in things material how can we perform the real, inner denials of the spirit life that will bring us to the stature of Christ?

The God-directed life is from beginning to end a life of control: controlling our words, controlling our thoughts, controlling our emotions, controlling our feelings. Indeed, every mental, moral and physical aspect of our lives must be brought under the control of the law of God. This is the only way we can attain the standard of Christ. This is the only way we can truly do all to the glory of God. This is the only way we can qualify for the full reward.

Let us make this week of self-denial a steppingstone to that perfect control.



Lines to Live By

IF YOU want to get a favor done by some obliging friend,
And want a promise safe and true, on which you may depend,
Don't go to him who always has much leisure time to plan,
But if you want your favor done, just ask the busy man.

The man with leisure never has a moment he can spare,
He's always "putting off" until his friends are in despair;
But he whose every waking hour is crowded full of work
Forgets the art of wasting time, he cannot stop to shirk.

*So when you want a favor done and want it right away,
Go to the man who's working time is twenty hours a day;
He'll find a moment sure, somewhere, that has no other use,
And serve you while the idle man is framing an excuse!*

—Author Unknown.

O Father, shake me out of my little, petty circles. Let me grasp a deathless hope of an infinite plan, infinitely unfolding.

No Time For God

YOU'VE time to build houses, and in them to dwell,
And time to do business, to buy and to sell;
But none for repentance, or deep, earnest prayer;
To seek for salvation you've not time to spare.
You've time for earth's pleasures, for frolic and fun—
For her glittering treasures how quickly you run,
But you care not to seek for the truth and the light
And the favor of God who will end the dark night.
You've time to take voyages over the sea,
And time to take in the wide world's jubilee;
But soon your bright hopes will be lost in the gloom
Of the river of death and the dark, silent tomb.
You've time to resort to woods, mountain and glen,
And time to gain knowledge from books and of men;
Yet no time to search for the wisdom of God.
But what of your soul when you're under the sod?
For time will not linger when helpless you lie,
Staring death in the face, you will take time to die!
Then, what of the Judgment? Pause! think! I implore,
For time will be lost on eternity's shore.

WE HAVE had an uphill fight, and it will
continue to be uphill all the way—there can be
no coasting to victory.

WHERE you come from is not nearly as im-
portant as where you are going.

WHAT looks like the end may really be a new
beginning.

WITH all my heart I long to know
The way, the one true way to go
Wherein to tread with eager feet
To God's all-holy will complete;
And on my pilgrim journey press
With songs of heart-deep holiness.

How many signs, the way along,
Can look so right but be so wrong!
How oft do errors still beguile,
And lead astray by many a mile!
How many pilgrims, lured aside,
In devious by-paths wander wide!

Yet in the Book of Truth divine
How steadily the way-marks shine,
To make those pilgrims truly wise
Who read with heav'n-anointed eyes!
And since the way is written clear
Why need we further doubt or fear?

Dear Father, clear my inward eyes
To see the truth which sanctifies—
God's way of holiness wherein
Is true, full vict'ry over sin;
In God's own holy way to go,
And then, eternal life to know.

Planning or Praying?

WE plan and plan, then pray
That God may bless our plan.
So runs the life of man.

But hearken! God saith: "Pray!"
And He will show His plan,
And make us, by His plan, a better man.

Points for the Month:

Week 1: The rungs in the ladder of success are composed of difficulties overcome.

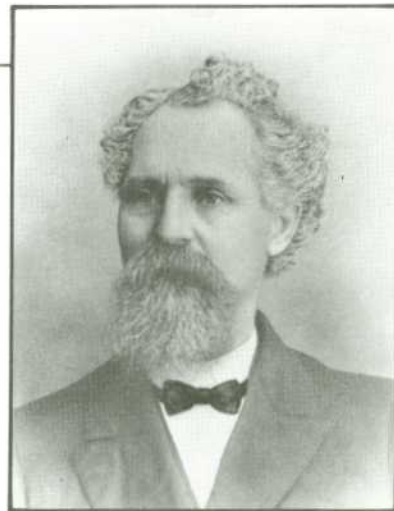
Week 2: If the Word of God dwells in us richly, it will work effectually.

Week 3: I'm on the way, and I'm going to make it!

Week 4: Obedience is better.

*The Life and Work of
Rev. L. T. Nichols*

An Honest Man



"One who was faithful to his God, and loved his fellowmen."

Chapter Five On, Still On

SOON after settling in Minnesota Mr. Nichols gave up active farming, renting his land to others that he might devote more time to study. Pamphlets on *The Kingdom of God*, *Natural and Spiritual Israel*, *The Sabbath*, and *Man: What Is He?* were written and printed on the press brought from the West; earlier tracts written in Oregon were revised and republished. So assiduous a writer was he, and so able to concentrate, that it is said that one of his books was largely written while stacking grain, between loads!

To the person of average ability, preaching, writing, printing and manufacturing would seem a Herculean work. But L. T. Nichols was not an average man. His mental caliber was remarkable and his resourceful brain was ever busy. In addition to all this, in his spare time (!) he had invented and patented several useful articles, including a four-horse evener for use on harvesting machines, an improved hay press, a hay loader, a patent farm gate, and a fire escape, all of which he manufactured in a large shop on his own farm. This brought him a good income, yet he never became attached to money or the making of it. When a call for help would come from Minneapolis, or Davenport, or Barry, or Springfield, the machinery would be shut down, perhaps for weeks, while he was in the work he loved best, spending and being spent for the salvation of others.

In 1890 a congregation was founded in Davenport, Iowa, the home city of his one-time teacher in Wisconsin days, Mary Eastman, now Mary Lee, and a zealous disciple. The following year a little church was built in Ellington, all the work and expense being borne by the leader and his brethren. (In fact, at no time did he or any of his followers ever make an appeal to the public for any financial assistance of any nature.) An ecclesia in Minneapolis was without a place of worship, so an unused church in that city was purchased by a well-to-do brother and dedicated to the proclamation of the gospel. Owatonna, sixteen miles away, was the home of a number of believers, who worshiped at Ellington when possible and at home when Mr. Nichols visited their city.

In Barry, too, a church had been built, and a zealous band carried on under the wise

and gentle rule of the Rev. Maud Hembree. Twice a year at the least Mr. Nichols made the circuit of his scattered congregations. These visits were events. Lists of written questions had accumulated and were brought forth for answering; there were practical matters where judgment must be rendered and discipline given; and soul-stirring exhortations left the little bands revived and refreshed, more deeply rooted in the faith.

An incident of those days reveals the deep sincerity of the leader. An ecclesia had prepared a program of welcome for his visit, and the songs, recitations and tributes were rendered with fervor. On the surface all was proper and pleasing. But things were not right in this particular congregation. There were sins unconfessed and unforsaken, and the generally prevailing attitude had been too complacent. In one of his most soul-searching sermons he refused to accept the welcome, telling them plainly that it was distasteful to him until such time as they should from the heart repent of their evil ways and turn from them. Such a leader was not working for the honor of men.

In Barry another attempt was made to ensnare him in a net of gold. On a certain Sunday morning in August, 1900, Mr. Nichols, in the pulpit of the little church, delivered a powerful sermon on the four beasts of Daniel's vision and prophecy (ch. 7). In the congregation was a stranger, a New York millionaire named Bateman, who was spending a vacation with relatives in town. This sort of preaching was new to him, something entirely different, and he was deeply impressed by the power, fearlessness and ability of the speaker. An idea began to take form in the visitor's mind; and, being a man accustomed to quick and decisive action, by the

close of the service it had matured.

Introducing himself to Mr. Nichols, he informed him that the large, liberal and wealthy New York church of which he was a member—an influential member, he inferred—was in need of a minister. The field was broad, and many more people could be reached than in a sleepy Midwest town like Barry. Such a man as Mr. Nichols—a preacher mighty and eloquent in the Scriptures—would fill the place admirably. Would he accept a "call"? The salary, he said, would be well worth considering.

"Yes, I will go," the preacher said, without hesitation, "if you will give me more than I am getting now. I am a sensible man, and willing to work for the best paymaster."

Well pleased, the New Yorker mentioned a salary he felt sure would be attractive. Mr. Nichols declined. The New Yorker increased his offers to as high as \$20,000 a year—a salary all but unheard of in 1900!—and was painfully surprised when his offer was still rejected as much too small.

"Tell me," he said, "how much are you receiving now? What are your prospects?"

"I am working for a reward far beyond what eye has seen or ear heard or the heart of man has imagined; a life that will never end, riches and power and glory that will be eternal, a strength of body and mind that will never weaken or decay. These things Jesus will give me when He returns, if I serve Him faithfully. Then, too, in this present life I receive a hundredfold of joy and happiness as I go along, for I know I am on the way to the Kingdom of God. Can you offer me more than this?"

The visitor was silent. "You see," Mr. Nichols continued, "if I should accept your offer, I would be obliged to preach to please the people, so I would no longer be free to speak the Word of God without fear. Money has too much power, and I cannot afford to lose my eternal reward for a paltry \$20,000 a year. I hope you understand, sir."

"I see. . . I see. Money would have no attraction for you. I am sorry, Mr. Nichols."

*MY rest is in Zion, my rest is not here;
Then why should I murmur when trials are near?
Be hushed, my dark spirit—the worst that can come
But hastens my journey and forces me on.*

*It is not for me to be seeking my bliss,
And building my hopes in a region like this;
I look for a city which hands have not piled,
I pant for a country by sin undefiled.*

*Let trial and danger my progress oppose,
They only make Zion more sweet a repose;
Come joy or come sorrow, whate'er may befall,
A home with my Lord will make up for it all.*

*A scrip on my back, and a staff in my hand,
I march on in haste through the enemy's land;
The road may be rough, but it cannot be long,
And I'll smooth it with hope, and I'll cheer it with song.*

It must have been something of a shock to the unquenchably enthusiastic mind of Brother Nichols to find that the truth which lay nearest and dearest to his heart was unacceptable to the majority of the educated and cultured.

Here came a severe test of his honesty. A little shading, a little softening, a little relaxing, a little spiritual dishonesty could have won

false values. An honest consideration of these facts, an honest reverence for the law of God kept him steadfast in his duty, rejoicing and glorying in the cross of Jesus Christ which daily separated him further and further from the world.

Bread cast upon the waters in Oregon was carried to far-distant London, England, and there nourished a few hungry souls. A gentle-

Six months were spent in this part of the world, mostly in London; visits were also made to Swansea and other Welsh cities, always finding a few who seemed to receive the word with joy.

Again on this voyage he was moved to acknowledge the protecting hand of the Eternal. Ships docking at New York shortly after they had sailed told of five days of fearful tempests which had wrecked many vessels and caused deaths and injuries to passengers and crewmen on other vessels. There was much apprehension among the sailors and travelers, but to their amazement the sea was tranquil and the sky clear throughout the voyage. To them it seemed almost a miracle; to him it was the providential care of his Heavenly Father.

On this trip came his final breach with nominal Christadelphianism. Through the years he had hoped against hope that he could by some means cause the leaders of the sect, which had been promising in its youth, to accept the principles which he found so plainly revealed in the Bible. Upon his arrival in London he lost no time contacting these leaders, but it was of no use. The proposition that we can and must live sinlessly to be saved was too much, just as it had been in Oregon eleven years before; they were repelled and antagonized by the lofty standard.

Many lively discussions were held in their assemblies, where most of his work was done. On one occasion a discussion was arranged between Mr. Nichols and a Mr. Martin, each having the privilege of cross-examining the other. Mr. Martin boasted in his opening remarks that he would have no difficulty in "tying Mr. Nichols up and laying him away in a corner." But the American's first questions blasted his hopes, for in the course

Here came a severe test of his honesty. . . .

him a following from a higher social and cultural level. But however strong the temptation may have come to him as his aspiring soul yearned for altitude and nobility, his immediate answer was, "Get thee behind me, Satan!" He had renounced once for all the hidden things of dishonesty, nor could he be induced by any fleshly consideration to handle the Word of God deceitfully (II Cor. 4:2). "The wisdom of this world is foolishness with God," and with all godly ones because it does not procure eternal things. If these humble folk were the ones who would hear the voice of God and obey it, they were his people and he would serve them gladly.

"Hath not God chosen the poor of this world, rich in faith?" Far better a fool who knows he is a fool and seeks to become wise in the knowledge of the Eternal than a fool vainly puffed up by human wisdom and unwilling to bow to the thoughts of his Creator. These common people, honest men and women before God, would if faithful be eligible for the highest honor that human mind can conceive. The culture and station of the world are

man in that great city one day picked from the wastebasket in the building where he was employed a small pamphlet. He saw it treated on the practical Christian life and, being much interested along that line, took it home and eagerly read it. Finding that it contained Bible truths, he continued his investigation by writing to the author, Mr. Nichols, and eventually by coming to America. After spending some time in Minnesota, hearing and learning, he urged Mr. Nichols to visit London. The invitation was readily accepted, for Mr. Nichols had previously contemplated a journey to England hoping to find a fertile field in which to sow the seed of the Kingdom.

In the autumn of 1891 he embarked, accompanied by his wife, who was his faithful companion in all his travels. She it was who looked after all the details of everyday life, thus leaving his mind free for the greater work. She was also a gifted letter-writer, and many were the resourceful and inspiring letters written by her to the dear friends at home, giving vivid accounts of the interest aroused and of meetings held in the different places visited.

of a dozen answers he was made to state that while Christ died, his life did not; He was dead and alive at the same time! Such reasoning disclosed a muddy streak in the Christadelphian concept of the nature of man, one of their basic doctrines; for if Christ, who was created "in all points like his brethren," could possess something like an immortal soul, then all His brethren and, in fact, all other men could also. Mr. Nichols had long ago seen this weakness and progressed to the truth of the matter, and his opponent quickly found himself securely tied and laid in a very dark corner.

Mr. Roberts, the successor of Dr. Thomas, alarmed at the newcomer's success in convincing his followers of their errors, attempted to overthrow him in a debate. Like Mr. Martin, he soon found the evidence too powerful and became nervous. At last, in desperation, he attempted to flee by way of a door leading from the rostrum. The door opened outward, but Roberts, in his confusion, kept trying to pull it inward, to the amusement of his audience. A number of converts were made and baptized in the sea, Mr. Nichols not having yet arrived at a full understanding of the subject of baptism.

Perceiving that there was no hope of persuading the leaders of the sect to advance, he stepped out alone. It must have appalled him to realize suddenly that he was indeed alone, that of all earth's millions the Almighty had chosen him to bring to light the long-buried truth in all its parts and to prepare a people in the eleventh hour of the day of salvation. He felt very humble and unworthy, crying out with the poet king of Israel,

"Who am I, O Lord God, and what is mine house, that thou hast brought me hitherto?"

Yet no man can say that he failed in any particular to rise to the chal-

lenge of this tremendous responsibility laid upon him. His past life had been a thorough preparation for the work, and the years which followed bore eloquent testimony that God had indeed worked in the last days by the hand of a fit man.

The name "Christadelphian" was now abandoned. Brother Nichols had found the sect in a deplorable state, apart from its doctrinal and

enforced absence, for during it was produced his incomparable *General Letter to All the Churches*, a work outstanding in power, vigor, directness, literary style and lofty ethical teaching.

One feature of the World's Columbian Exposition at Chicago in 1893 was a World Parliament of Religions, embracing more than five hundred faiths. Thousands of dele-

A little spiritual dishonesty could have won him a following from a higher social and cultural level. But he refused.

practical errors. Schisms had disrupted it until no less than seven divisions called themselves by that name. Having no desire to add to the confusion, he bade the whole organization a last farewell. Henceforth his church was known as Christian Brethren.

The next spring found the Nichols' again in Minnesota. He was now free to travel whenever necessary in carrying on the great work for which he had been called, preparing a people for the coming of Jesus. At one time, while securing one of his patents, he visited Washington, D. C. While there, a number of meetings were held and some powerful sermons delivered. He also visited Lanesville, Virginia, where a hearty welcome was accorded him. He spent some time there and held several meetings, arousing an enthusiastic interest. But, as often happens even now, when he was gone "the fowls came and plucked up the seed."

The winter of 1893-4 was spent in Florida, for the sake of Mrs. Nichols' health. The world is richer for that

gates were invited from all over the world, including representatives of Brahmanism, Buddhism, Zoroastrianism, Jainism, Mohammedanism, Judaism, Catholicism—Eastern and Western—and many branches of Protestantism. Even the Evolutionists were represented, a daring thing for that day. There was much fanfare about "brotherhood," "fellowship," and "unity," the spirit of the assembly being epitomized in a congratulatory message from an English noblewoman, which said in effect that the only way to preserve this unity which was so good and so pleasant is to refrain from mentioning points of difference. This counsel seems to have been scrupulously followed, with the result that the meeting, for all its high hopes and lofty phrases, accomplished nothing.

Such a gathering of dignitaries, with sessions from May to October, offered a tempting field for L. T. Nichols, the lone champion, to sow some seeds of truth. There was probably not much hope, he knew, but there was nothing like trying, so

he applied for admission. However, he found the way barred by the Congress' insistence upon belief in the "common Fatherhood of God and brotherhood of man." This he could not accede to, for the Scriptures plainly said of some, "They which are the children of the flesh, these are not the children of God" (Romans 9:8). The only way a man can become a child of God, he had

On the voyage over, he was invited by the captain of the ship to conduct religious services on Sunday morning. The invitation was accepted on condition that all classes of passengers be allowed to attend, the captain having intended to limit attendance to the first-class tourists.

A powerful sermon was delivered, impressing all those present. Mr. Nichols called attention to the vast

the greater part of the time was spent in various cities, towns and villages in Wales. Like Paul, he had planted the seed of Truth on his previous visit to the British Isles and now, like Apollos, he was watering the seed that it might grow and bring forth fruit. Night after night, week after week, he expounded the Word faithfully, mostly to investigators, that they might be better able to carry out its teachings in their daily lives. If all the sermons delivered during that one winter were printed, they would make a large volume.

This was now the second time he had crossed the ocean, spending his time and strength without money and without price, and all for the good of others!

The effort was well rewarded. A number of his hearers afterward left their homes in England and Wales and came to America, that they might have the personal help of the leader. Others unable to make the move continued as active believers in their home settings, and their descendants still carry on today.

After six months laboring in this field he once more returned to his Minnesota home, to be welcomed by friends and loved ones.

In 1898 it was with deep sorrow that he laid his beloved mother, Emmeline Dunbar Nichols, to rest. Throughout his years of labor, she had been a comforter and helper, believing in him, understanding him, defending him, working with him. A singer and gifted writer of verse and hymns, she was an able helper in his work of publishing.

Until the last years of the nineteenth century, Mr. Nichols had believed in and practiced the rite of baptism by immersion as a necessary step in establishing a covenant-relation with God. Realizing that a covenant could not be intelligently

Every discovery meant a complete reversal of his former position, but there was no hesitation. L. T. Nichols was an honest man.

found, was by *adoption*, which involved a complete change of life and habits. This view was not "orthodox" in the estimation of the astute Congress, and they wanted none of it, preferring the soothing syrup and slumber songs to the clear tones of the trumpet of the Lord.

The same thing happened later, in 1904, when he went in person to St. Louis to apply for admission to the religious convocation in connection with the Louisiana Purchase Exposition being held that year. His missionary activities along the Mississippi River had made his name sufficiently well known that the door was closed in haste.

"Foxes have holes," said Jesus, "and the birds of the air have nests; but the Son of man hath not where to lay his head"—His truth.

In 1897, Brother Nichols again crossed the Atlantic to spend another winter in the foreign field. He and his wife took passage on the "Kaiser Wilhelm der Grosse" on its maiden trip, one of the largest passenger vessels afloat at that time.

dimensions and mechanical construction of the ocean greyhound upon which they traveled, asking the hearers what they would think of a man who would seriously insist that such a creation had evolved itself from a barrel-stave and a crowbar. "How much more foolish and absurd," said he, "to insinuate that man, the most wonderful of God's creations on this planet, a self-sustaining, reasoning being, was evolved from a tadpole or some other minute organism. Such is not God's method of working. What He does is done with purpose. His works are in righteousness and in harmony with reason." The theory of evolution as taught by Darwin was proved fallacious, and God's evolution defined—to grow from our original condition of sinfulness into new creatures, to the stature of Christ, that in the end we may be worthy to receive the final change to the highest form of life, immortality.

Some little time was spent in London where many interesting and forceful sermons were delivered; but

made without knowledge of the whole truth, it logically followed that as each principle of truth was rediscovered, the believer must be re-baptized.

However, the more he studied the subject, the more uncertain he became of his ground. According to the Biblical Record, baptism never stood alone but was invariably accompanied by the gifts and power of the Holy Spirit. In this day, the rite had nothing of the kind to bestow. Could it have been a temporary institution, given for a particular time and purpose? Further research convinced him that this was indeed the case. The first recorded form of baptism ended with the ministry

of John the Baptist. That of the Apostles was definitely a part of the Apostolic Commission, and ceased with it. Since the consummation of that age, when the written Word was completed and the Holy Spirit withdrawn, water baptism, like laying on of hands, has had no place in the commission under which God's people now labor.

This very important discovery meant a complete reversal of his former position, but there was no hesitation. L. T. Nichols was an honest man, and as such he had no choice in the matter. He could not for a moment cling to belief that

had been proven error, simply because he had done so in the past. Far better to admit his mistake and make the change now than when too late.

Henceforth the baptism which he sought for himself and his followers was the baptism into the death of Jesus Christ, so well described by Paul in the 6th chapter of Romans as a death to sin, crucifying the "old man," within being buried in the water of life and arising to walk in newness of life. It was this ready willingness to exchange error for truth, whatever the cost, which enabled him to succeed gloriously where others had failed.

(Continued Next Issue)

Aim High!

GOD has a plan for your life, if you are His. And this plan can be realized only as you follow Paul's example: "I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus" (Phil. 3:14). This plan includes your whole personality, your intellect, your emotions, your will.

Your body gives you physical consciousness in a material world. The body is the seat of your five senses: sight, hearing, smell, taste, and touch. These and all you are must be under the direction and control of your new aim if you give your life to God.

Young people, with their fuller measure of vim and life, especially need to be alert to the truth which Paul emphasized: "Ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's" (I Cor. 6:20).

The Lord also commands through Paul, "Present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God" (Rom. 12:1). It is an appeal for positive dedication to God, for active holiness and service of all the members of our body, all its senses, all we are, to be given as an acceptable offering to the Lord.

We are called to aim high, to press toward the

mark of God in our thought life. Paul said, "We have the mind of Christ," which is saying what he also wrote in Romans 12:2, "Be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind."

Just as this transformation by the renewing of our mind is the decisive step calling for discipline on our part, so growth in grace and development of Christian character will be ours only by the process of a disciplined mind. Men like Peter, Paul, and John did not just happen. Godly giants like Moses, Abraham and Isaiah did not just evolve. Theirs were dedicated lives and disciplined minds.

Your dedicated life and disciplined mind can make you what God wants you to be in your vocation—whether it be agriculture or commerce, marketing or homemaking.

Your mind can make you God-conscious if you fill it with the thoughts He gives. This sets you infinitely above the highest animal. Your mind, rightly disciplined, is the funnel through which God can pour His thoughts into your whole life and personality. Thus filled, you can press toward the mark as you let God become the joy of your heart and the answer to your universe, life and destiny.

This is the way to true happiness, as well as to pleasing God, and men will rise up and call you blessed all through eternity; if you are faithful to your aim, even to "the high calling of God in Christ Jesus."

—Contributed

Don't Forget!

**"If we have forgotten the name of our God, or stretched out our hands to a strange god; shall not God search this out? for he knoweth the secrets of the heart."
—Psalm 44:20-21**

THE FIRST and greatest of God's commandments is clear and concise: "And thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind, and with all thy strength" (Mark 12:30). Being all-wise and eternal and possessing the power to bless and prosper in this life and to bestow life eternal, God is just in requiring full allegiance. As He is capable of granting to us the ultimate—endless life—and will delight to do so for a short life of obedient service, He has a perfect right to require of us all that we can give—a surrendered life, wholly devoted to seeking and doing His will.

Who, then, are the strange gods? or what is idolatry? We may easily scorn the gods of ancient Egypt, Greece, Rome, and, in fact, all the heathen. We despise the idols of wood, gold, or stone in far-off lands; but it is equally as easy to decline into ungodliness of thought, imagination, and unchristian practice. Idolatry may be defined as undue devotion to unworthy objects. It is intense admiration, veneration, or love, of any unworthy person or thing. Further, it may be any pursuit in life on which our heart is set. Pleasure seeking may be idolatry. A hobby, a profession, a business enterprise may monopolize our attention and dominate our lives. Strange gods are these, gods of our own creation. But anything that takes our attention from serving God wholeheartedly, anything we place in our affection above God or His service is an idol or strange god.

We should remember that it is of religious people that the words of our text were spoken, particularly those who know the true God, who understand His Word and have covenanted to serve Him. To speak of

forgetting something suggests that we once had it in mind. The words of the familiar hymn are fitting here:

*Jesus calls us from the worship
Of the vain world's golden store,
From each idol that would keep us,
Saying "Christian, love Me more."*

God demands more love of us than we have for the distracting things about us.

If we really believed that in Him we "live and move and have our being," that to Him all hearts are open, all desires known, and that from Him no secrets are hid, we would be more concerned about rendering to Him the reverence due. By faith, let us deliberately welcome into our minds the inspiring thoughts about God and His attributes. In so doing we shall expel any inclination to waywardness, to seeking our own pleasures or ambitions.

The tendency of double-minded humanity through the centuries has been to serve God only half-heartedly. They professed that they knew Him, but by works they denied Him. They praised Him with their lips, but their hearts were far from Him. It was "in the dark" that the ancients of the house of Israel performed their unholy rites (Ezek. 8:12). They said, "The Lord seeth us not." In this they were unmindful of the Prophet's warning long before: "Woe unto them that seek deep to hide their counsel from the Lord, and their works are in the dark, and they say, Who seeth us? and who knoweth us?" (Isa. 29:15). Had they served the Lord in singleness of heart, they would not have fallen into such apostasy.

God had a covenant with Israel. They were to be His people, holy and free from the defilements of the heathen nations about them. They were to be, as He pictured (Jeremiah 3), His bride, or wife, chaste and pure, having no other allegiance but Him. His promises of blessing went with the covenant, and all He had promised had been fulfilled. They enjoyed the prosperity of the land; they were guarded from the enmity of surrounding nations; they had men of intelligence capable of ruling justly. But in spite of all the goodness on the part of God, they forgot. And in their forgetfulness, they sinned.

What did God do? He searched them out, and His judgments for disobedience followed.

Is the world of today very different from Israel before her downfall? Is it not concerned merely with the things of the present? Material progress is decidedly in advance of spiritual progress. Business, work and pleasure crowd out true religion and genuine piety. A form is maintained, but the real lessons of godly conduct are not practiced.

But here we are principally concerned with the loyalty of those who understand the precepts of God and are striving to live by them. The prophet Ezekiel (14:2) spoke of a class who had set up idols in their hearts. As we stated before, these "strange gods" may be anything that keeps us from serving God wholeheartedly, so we wish to stress the need of care and watchfulness. How needful that we watch the stream of thought that flows through our mind. Evil imaginations, unlawful desires seep in so subtly and in such attractive disguises that before we know it we erect an idol in our heart—and worship it. Particularly we should be watchful when our mental powers are less active and our imagination is free to run.

There is no substitute for loyalty to God. Loyalty is that quality which prompts a person to be true in his undertaking to serve God above all else. It means one has a definite destination, a fixed purpose in life and steadfastness in his pursuit. With loyalty to God comes power, poise, purpose, and a thorough strengthening of character. Whatever duties have to be discharged are not burdensome to the loyal. Indeed, work is a delight to the worker. The reward is for the doer. The Master's service is raised to the highest plane when love for the task is fused with the effort.

We know the reward for loyal service to God will be grand. On the other hand, the reward for evil doing or "forgetting" will be dismal. But what if we feel—yes, *know* that we have done wrong in the past; that we have stretched out our hands to "strange gods," yet are desirous of returning to God and right?

As the habit was formed, so it must be broken. As we accumulated mental trash that cluttered the mind and crowded out the heavenly things, so now we must discard it. As we yielded to temptation, now we must refuse. As thread by thread strands of doubt bound us into bondage, so now thread by thread we must unwind them until we stand free. As we builded, stone by stone, a wall that separated us from God, so now we ourselves must toil and stone by stone tear down the wall until it is overthrown.

Worshiping strange gods may be pleasing for a season, but only for a season. To God are known all our ways, and He will recompense according to our works. Let us all examine ourselves as in His presence. Let us see our idolatries for what they are. And then, let us deliberately seek His help that we may cast them all away and no longer allow them to separate us from Him.

MM

Wrong Labels

Have you ever pasted the wrong label on something you have prepared for your freezer or storage? I did and was quite surprised to discover rhubarb when I had thought I was thawing peaches.

A woman confessed to the sin of pride because she had admired her own beauty before her mirror for a great length of time. It took her teen-age daughter to tell her, "Mother, you don't have pride—you have imagination."

Sometimes we feel sure we are right when in reality we are labeling things wrong. An elderly man, looking up from his newspaper, said, "Print just isn't what it used to be." He believed his eyes were good, so he assumed the print was poor.

How do your labels read? Does your label for worldliness read *broad-mindedness*? your label for gossiping *stating facts*? your label for sin *social maladjustment*? your label for faltering *misunderstanding*?

One woman kept her tea in a cocoa tin that had the word *matches* taped on it. Anyone visiting in her home would suppose the tin held matches. And if not matches, then perhaps cocoa, because it was a cocoa tin. Only the woman knew that the tin contained tea.

As Christians, our labels can be misrepresentative, too. Let us be honest in our Christian walk and conversation so that the world cannot tag us *hypocrite*, but let us live so that the word *Christian* is our true label.

—Contributed.

• No Literal Devil?

"You say there is no literal devil, would you please explain Job 1 beginning at the 6th verse, including the first and second chapters?"

The allusion to a Satan in Job 1:6 is not definite proof that the Scripture upholds the idea of an all-powerful being with powers for evil almost equal to God's powers for good. Indeed, such a position—if it could be maintained, and if it could be proved that God was behind such a move—would seriously discredit His claim to absolute fairness, to "justice and judgment" as attributed by the Psalmist (89:14).

Authorities on Scripture say it should be stated as "the Satan," hence "The Satan, the slanderer of man, *diabolos*." It is rendered "the Adversary" in the margin of the Authorized Version of the Bible. Satan, in Biblical usage, denotes anyone in opposition to God, "a Hebrew word signifying an adversary, an enemy, an accuser." In Job 1, the Satan maliciously tries to withdraw God's approval from Job by attributing low motives to him. The enmity between those who do not wish to serve God and those who do is equally marked today.

Satan has always opposed. Paul wrote: "Wherefore we would have come unto you, even I Paul, once and again; but Satan hindered us" (I Thess. 2:18). We have no record that a Satan from some infernal region or from any other abode hindered Paul in his travels, but wicked men did. At one time forty such men vowed that they would neither eat nor drink until they had taken his life (Acts 23:12-13). And in many other ways Satan hindered Paul in his ministry, but the Satan was always wicked men.

Jesus spoke of Satan's activity in Rev. 2:10, "Fear none of those things which thou shalt suffer: behold, the devil shall cast some of you into prison," but He did not identify him as a demon. The devil that cast John the Baptist into prison and beheaded him was a *man*, Herod the Tetrarch. We read that "the devils also fear and tremble." One fulfillment of this statement was the case of Felix, before whom Paul appeared in his own

defense. As Paul reasoned of "righteousness, temperance, and judgment to come, Felix trembled," but not to the point of changing his ways. He was still a devil, the same scheming politician, as is evidenced by the statement that he hoped money should have been given him by Paul for his release.

To Jesus, Satan was a *man*, an opposer, a devil. When Peter opposed Jesus' words He said to him: "Get thee behind me, Satan" (Matt. 16:23). On another occasion Jesus, referring to Judas, said, "Have not I chosen you twelve, and one of you is a devil?" (John 6:70). He did not say Judas was a man possessed of the devil, or that one of you *has* a devil, but "one of you is a devil."

Sin is the great opposer to God, and Paul represents sin as a master, and we, when we transgress, as his servants: "But God be thanked, that [though] ye were the servants of sin, . . . ye have obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine which was delivered you. Being then made free from sin, ye became the servants of righteousness . . . For when ye were the servants of sin, ye were free from righteousness" (Rom. 6:17-18, 20).

Sin, personified, and represented as a master, luring all to eternal death and destruction, is the Satan or devil in the case, and all who break God's law and walk in opposition to Him are called Satan, or devils.

The apostle John spoke as did Paul. He said, "Who-soever committeth sin transgresseth also the law: for sin is the transgression of the law . . . Little children, let no man deceive you: . . . he that committeth sin is of the devil . . . In this the children of God are manifest and the children of the devil" (I John 3:4, 7-8, 10).

These testimonies and many others show that in Bible phraseology the terms "satan" and "devil" are invariably applied to men and women who oppose God and disobey His law. With this knowledge at our disposal we can the more easily understand what Satan is referred to in Job 1:6. "There was a day when the sons of God came to present themselves before the Lord, and Satan came also among them." This Satan was a representative individual, a man, not a demon.

There was a Satan or adversary among the apostles

in the person of Judas, and how common it is even in these days, when the sons of God meet together to worship, for a Satan or adversary to be among them! And it was the same kind of a Satan in Job's day as in ours, or the same as with Jesus, who, in choosing His disciples, chose one who was "a devil." And let us not overlook the physical features of the Satan that was involved in the controversy about Job's sincerity. He appeared in person, he was able to converse with the Lord, and walk up and down through the earth. The devil of theology is not able to do any of these things.

It does not seem consistent with reason to suppose that the account in Job is a literal occurrence, or that either Job or the adversary were literal individuals. It seems more fitting to view it as a poem, a parable, a story containing the highest moral. Twice in the book of Job it is stated, "Job continued his parable." It has been suggested that its purpose is to discuss the problem of life, and, in particular, to refute the popular idea that suffering is the proof of sin; great suffering of great sin.

Under the caption "Introduction to the Wisdom Literature," the editors of the *New Commentary* trace the development of a philosophy of life that expresses itself in proverbs and riddles and fables. "These embody popular reflection upon the meaning and problems of the world. They are devices for handing on the accumulated experience of the past in a form that can be easily remembered and understood."

"In view of the foregoing we should expect to find in the earliest literature of Israel traces of this mental activity. And we are not disappointed. In Judges 9:8-15 Jotham expounds his warning and rebuke in a parable. Judges 14:12 witnesses to the custom of riddles. David quotes a proverb of the ancients (I Sam. 24:13). Nathan employs a parable to convict David of his sin (II Sam. 12:1-6). In II Sam. 14:1-21 and 20:16-22 we read of wise women who are skilled in devising methods of argument to forward a given policy."

Such wisdom flourished in Israel from its early days; however, its golden age came to be associated with the name of King Solomon. He is said to have spoken "three thousand proverbs." "When 'he spake of trees, . . . of beasts, and of fowl, and of creeping things, and of fishes,' we are not to imagine that he was a student of natural history. Rather those various objects afforded the material for fables like that of Jehoshaphat (II Kings 14:9-10)."

This so-called "Wisdom literature" is the product of this class of wise men. In the Old Testament it includes Job, Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, and portions of the Psalms. The aforementioned books are not legalistic as were

many parts of the writings of Moses, they were not prophetic as were Isaiah, Jeremiah and Daniel, and they were not historic. They were intended to teach righteous living by indirect approach.

To quote further from the *New Commentary*: "They are opposed to the maxims of a decadent Greek philosophy, the experience of sound religion. As we read Proverbs we are conscious that the wise men are attacking not mere stupidity or reluctance to learn, but a rival system of life. Over against the picture of Wisdom, inviting men to share her banquet, there stands the picture of Folly luring men into the ways of death . . . The religious genius of the Hebrew people rises to its noblest height in Job."

If we approach the book of Job from this angle all the incongruities disappear. Job's boils and the potsherd with which he scraped himself are indicative of the evils that naturally defile us, and of the vital willingness on our part to be cleansed from them whatever the process. The Satan also is representative. Our evil natures are always ready to discredit our brother on the grounds that his service for God is a shrewd bargain, that he does so for the temporal advantages he gains for so doing.

And God, in His impeachable justice in dealing with His earthly children is the hero of the story. MM

*How blest Thy saints! how safely led,
How surely kept, how richly fed!
Thou God of all in earth and sea,
How happy they who rest in Thee!*

*Thy hand holds fast the mighty hills,
Thy voice the troubled ocean stills;
Evening and morning hymn Thy praise,
While earth Thy bounty wide displays.*

*The year is with Thy goodness crowned;
The clouds drop wealth the world around;
Through Thee the deserts laugh and sing,
And Nature smiles and owns her King.*

*Lord, on our souls Thy Spirit pour;
The moral waste within restore;
O let Thy love our spring-tide be,
And help us all bear fruit to Thee.*

—Selected

No Desire to Go Back

I never cease to give thanks to God for allowing me to "know of the doctrine." Yes, all the others, have nothing to say—it's all private interpretation. So many, many things that used to cause questions, doubts and fears are so plain now and I can rejoice in the Truth!

There is nothing to hinder me from going back into the world this very night, if I wanted to. And I wouldn't even fear the devil casting me into a burning hell! But I have no desire for the world. I'm serving God because I want to, not because of fear of hell fire.

Georgia

B. P.

Keep Stirring

We need to keep stirring up our minds; human nature is weak and needs stimulating. It will take a mighty stream of water to cleanse us of all our evils.

Every moment is deciding our future. We must pay close attention to what we have heard, for only those who have on the garment of right doing will be prepared for a life beyond this.

Iowa

B. M.

Much Room

If we would be honest with ourselves, we would have to admit there is room for improvement. And we will do well to make some improvements and get to work, for the night is coming when no man can work.

Newfoundland

G. W.

Looking Up

First of all thank you for the Word of the Lord which you are directing to me as a solace for every moment of life. Trusting in the Lord am not afraid of the future. Am trying not to veer from the path of the Lord and to keep a clean conscience before God and man. For many years now I have kept in mind the whole of Psalm 37, especially verse 25. We do not hang our heads down in these difficult times but are looking up, ahead of us.

Times are hard everywhere, every country has its own existing problems even as individuals also.

It is easy to keep close to God when all goes well. We should keep in mind the words of Job 2:10, more so for evil does not emanate from God. Difficulties, in spite of appearances, are good because they teach us persistence, at the same time to value the things that contain real worth. After all we have the certainty from God that the trials He allows will not exceed our strength.

Thanks to this correspondence, have been able to come nearer to you, am very happy about it.

Poland

E. K. & Family

Near at Hand

It was lovely to receive the Message this month, so full of good "spiritual food and drink."

What a lot of terrible things are happening in the world today. It really does point to the near coming of Elijah and our beloved Lord—"The night is far spent the day is at hand" (Rom. 13:12). Let us, therefore, put on the Lord Jesus Christ.

South Wales

M. S.

Enduring to the End

The man who tries to outdistance his competitors in the first ten minutes and leaves his exhausted body in the road for them to carry the rest of the journey is in no sense a success.

In taking up a burden, it is a mistake to take up one so heavy that after the first day you have to drop it upon another's shoulders. When a man starts out on the narrow way, he is not a success if he is so good the first month that he has to be a little worse in each succeeding month. However, it seems to be human nature to get all fired up about something at the outset and then, as time continues, to let the flames of enthusiasm die down. This we must guard against and continually stoke these fires with the wonderful promises of God daily, for it is a matter of life or death.

We should realize how deeply we depend on God to provide the right conditions for us to survive. If He were to neglect to supply one vital thing even for a few minutes, we would all be wiped out in the twinkling of an eye.

*Hast thou plenty? Then rejoice;
Rejoice and freely share.
Hast thou scanty store? E'en then
A little thou canst spare.
And hast thou only bit or crumb
A donor yet thou mayest become,
Since morsel from thy less or least
For bird or insect maketh feast.
Be the portion small or great,
The loving, generous heart
Will always find it large enough
To give away a part.*

Manitoba

E. H.

Appreciative

We enjoy reading the MESSAGE and the other communications.

Ontario

H. H.

Refreshed

It is refreshing to have the cup of cold water come from a far country. It is one of the blessings in these times, that we can share the same comfort of hope, one with another, though we are many miles apart.

We must finish the course we have undertaken to the very end. As in every test, the work must be completed before we can receive a prize. For it is as Jesus said, only he that endures to the end will be saved; or in the words of James, let us never give up until our virtue is perfect and complete.

Like the wise virgins, our lamps should be in readiness to meet any occasion as it arises, with a plenteous supply of oil in reserve. Our supply will run out if we do not keep renewing it from day to day.

Australia

J. B.

Reading, Learning

I am still learning many things that have been steppingstones to help me along the journey so I can be ready when Christ comes back to earth.

I have been reading *What Must We Do To Be Saved?* How can anyone believe that salvation is free for the asking when so much of the Bible tells us we have to work out our own salvation, and we read "Wash you, make you clean, put away the evil of your doings . . ." and so many, many more scriptures.

It seems so unbelievable that the nations of the earth will join together to try to stop the Lord and His army from taking control of this earth. How can they dare to believe they can stop Him from fulfilling the prophecies He gave in His Word! In fact, how can anyone be so foolish as to think they can stand up to Him? How little they know.

New York

L. S.

Holding on to the Angel

IF WE can only hold on to the Almighty as Jacob did to the angel, and not let go until we receive the blessing, we shall come out all right.

What a night Jacob had!

From the time he left his uncle's house, he had faced trouble. Laban had prospered during the years that Jacob had been with him. He did not want Jacob to leave. And although in the end Jacob left without letting his uncle know, Laban did not take revenge upon him. God stood in the way.

Then Jacob faced another trial. His brother Esau, who had said he would kill him, was coming up against him with four hundred men.

Jacob wasted no time. He went right to work arranging as best he could for the safety of those with him. He was determined to be as prepared as he could be. But he realized the inadequacy of his own strength. He knew that should his brother still be angry with him, his life and the lives of those with him would be in danger. He did on his part, did all that he could, then he prayed to God.

That night the angel appeared to Jacob. There was a trial there, a testing, a struggling to see whether he would hold on. A mortal would never wrestle with an angel, but the angel was testing Jacob. He touched his thigh and Jacob went limping along, but he never let go of that angel—not until he blessed him.

Then it was that the angel told him his name would be changed to Israel, which means a true soldier of God. "For as a prince hast thou power with God and with men, and hast prevailed" (Gen. 32:28).

Jacob was delivered. Esau came and did not harm him.

Hosea speaks of that time when Jacob prevailed with the angel and received the blessing: "He took his brother by the heel in the womb, and by his strength he had power with God: yea, he had power over the angel, and prevailed: he wept, and made supplication unto him: he found him in Bethel, and there he spake with us" (Hos. 12:3-4).

If we hold on to the Almighty, we shall not only get what we ask but "exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think" (Eph. 3:20). But there will be a testing; He will not bless us right away. We shall have to hold on through a long dark night, and it will be a struggle to hold on. But when the day breaks, when the morning comes, if we have endured unto the end, God will bless us. He will grant us power, everlasting power and authority and blessing. And then our name shall be changed to that of "a prince of God."

MM

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