



# Megiddo Message

Vol. 73, No. 2

The Benefits of Bible Faith and Practice

February, 1986

## Applied Christianity

**C**COURSES taught in our schools and universities today include many to which are attached the word "applied." There are courses in Applied Science, or Applied Mathematics, or Applied Electronics. The intention of such courses is to bridge the gap often existing between knowledge and application.

Such was the purpose of Jesus' life also. He came to demonstrate not Christianity alone but Christianity applied: the dedicated life actually lived, the cross actually borne, the law of God actually working in every situation of daily life. Christ literally did this. In Him the high aims and ideals of the prophets became flesh and blood; He personified the law of God because He lived it, talked it, thought it, prayed it, practiced it.

And what is our calling? To follow His steps, to apply what we know to what we do. How else can we merit Christ's approval?

Many were the lessons that Jesus' disciples received in the various aspects of Applied Christianity that Christ was teaching. When Peter asked if he could come to Jesus, walking on the water, did he not receive a lesson in Applied Faith? Faith was no problem so long as the boat was sound and the sea calm. But when there was nothing to uphold him but the power of God—was Peter's faith prepared for this? Peter thought it was; he found out that it was not!

Jesus was traveling with His disciples. They were tired, and a certain Samaritan village refused to give them food or lodging. What course of action did a couple of the disciples recommend to Jesus? *They* would give these unreasonable Samaritans their just deserts for such unkindness and ill will. Yes, if *they* were Jesus, they would call down fire from heaven upon them and be *done* with them!

But they were not Jesus. And so, following Jesus, they simply "went to another village." It was a lesson in Applied Forbearance.

One day Jesus was talking to a "certain ruler" who came to inquire of Him. "Good Master," he asked, "what shall I do to inherit eternal life?" (Luke 18:18-

22). Jesus began stating a few of the commandments, and concluded with this all-inclusive demand: "Sell all that thou hast, . . . and come, follow me." It was a lesson in Applied Sacrifice. Anyone could *talk* about what they might give up, but Jesus would have it done!

Another time, when great multitudes were following Him, He turned on them with this shocking demand (the account is found in Luke 14:25-33): "If any man come to me, and hate not (be not willing to suffer the loss of) his father, and mother, and wife, and children, and brethren, and sisters, yea, and his own life also, he cannot be my disciple." Another lesson in Applied Sacrifice.

Jesus continued immediately with another advanced lesson: "For which of you, intending to build a tower, sitteth not down first, and counteth the cost, whether he have sufficient to finish it? Lest haply, after he hath laid the foundation, and is not able to finish it, all that behold it begin to mock him, Saying, This man began to build, and was not able to finish." It was a lesson in Applied Engineering. It let them know that nothing about the Christ life is automatic. It must be thoroughly planned, carefully thought through, decided, and then acted upon.

When Peter asked how many times he should have to forgive his trespassing brother, what was Jesus' reply? "I say not unto thee, Until seven times: but, Until seventy times seven" (Matt. 18:21-22). Surely Peter did not miss the point. Nor should we. Forgiveness is to be more than a nice formality. It is to be sincerely felt and expressed. It is to be Applied Forgiveness.

Jesus observed those seeking the great things of this world. What was His answer? "For what shall it profit a man, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul?" (Mark 8:36). How well Jesus knew that life without God is only a pinpoint on the periphery of the everlasting, appearing for a moment and then gone forever. It was a lesson in Applied Perspectives.

Another time, Jesus gave this strange command  
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## 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

**Berkeley**—The Modern Language New Testament

**Weymouth**—The New Testament in Modern Speech

**Moffatt**—The Bible, A New Translation

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

## About Our Cover

Our cover photo is a winter scene in Powder Mill Park, near Rochester, New York.

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

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

## The Benefits of Bible Faith and Practice

*Scripture Reading: Mark 10:28-31*

**P**ERSONAL experience has proved to us beyond a doubt that the way of Christ is most satisfying in many ways. And after all, that is what we all should be seeking—the satisfying, the more abundant life, the key to immortal life and the glories that will attend it. Since we have found this satisfaction ourselves, we have a fervent desire to proffer it to others.

In this greatest of all quests, it is very important to seek in the right way; it is highly important to know just where we stand. We may think we are right; the world is full of people who think they are right on many subjects when the plainest of facts prove them wrong. We may even think of ourselves as Christians, and yet be wrong. We may console ourselves with the thought that the faith in which we were born and reared cannot be wrong; that we are safe in following the old familiar path. But that is not God's way, nor even the way of truly progressive humanity. If St. Paul had remained in the faith of his fathers, the Christian church would have lost its greatest missionary. Had the reformers of the 16th Century been content with the creeds in which they were nurtured, we should never have had the so-called Reformation.

Always be ready to change for the better.

We need not think we can hide behind our childhood helplessness. True, we are not responsible for the things we were taught in our tender years, but we *are* responsible for our conclusions after we reach the age of reason and independent thought. Ignorance does not excuse the violation of the law of the land, and the Apostle tells us that it will not excuse us with God either—in fact, it will alienate us from God; while the

prophet Hosea informs us that the “people are destroyed for lack of knowledge.” Paul's statement runs as follows: “This I say therefore, and testify in the Lord, that ye henceforth walk not as other Gentiles walk, in the vanity of their mind, having the understanding darkened, being alienated from the life of God through the ignorance that is in them, because of the blindness of their heart” (Eph. 4:17-18). Such a shelter is inconsistent with missionary work of any kind. If ignorance is to be a cloak, let us by all means abandon all missions and let the heathen alone, inasmuch as they are to be saved anyway. In fact, let us all take our chances with the ignorant.

### How to Avoid Serious Error

There are areas of Christian thought, and because of thought, then also of life, where likenesses and differences are so difficult to distinguish that we are often hard put to escape deception. In secular affairs the world over, error and truth travel the same highways, work in the same factories and fields, fly in the same planes, and shop in the same stores. So skilled is error at imitating truth that one is constantly being mistaken for the other. It takes a sharp eye these days to know which brother is Cain and which Abel.

But we must never take for granted anything that touches our soul's salvation. Isaac felt Jacob's arms and thought they were the arms of Esau. Even the disciples failed to spot the traitor among them; the only one of them who knew who he was, was Judas himself. That soft-spoken companion with whom we walk comfortably, and in whose company we take such delight, may be an angel of the evil one, whereas that rough, plain-spoken man whom we shun, may be God's very prophet sent to warn us against danger and eternal loss.

It is therefore critically important that the Christian take full advantage of every provision God has made to

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Note: *The Benefits of Bible Faith and Practice* is available as a complete church service on cassette. Price: \$3.00

save him from delusion. These provisions are prayer, faith, constant meditation on the Scriptures, obedience, humility; hard, serious thought, and complete resignation to the will of God. And all of these are closely linked.

### **Prayer**

Prayer is not a sure protection against error for the reason that there are many kinds of prayers, some of which are worse than useless. The prophets of Baal leaped upon the altar in a frenzy of prayer, but their cries went unregarded because they prayed to a god that did not exist. The God the Pharisees prayed to did exist, but He refused to listen to them because of their self-righteousness and pride. From them we may learn a profitable lesson in reverse.

In spite of the difficulties we encounter when we pray, prayer is a powerful and effective way to get right, stay right, and stay free from error. "If any of you lack wisdom," said the practical James, "let him ask of God, that giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not; and it shall be given him" (Jas. 1:5). But our asking must be within the framework of what God has promised He will do. All things else being equal, the praying man is less likely to think wrong than the man who neglects to pray. Said Jesus, "Men ought always to pray, and not to faint" (Luke 18:1).

### **Faith**

The apostle Paul calls faith a shield. The man of faith can walk at ease protected by his simple confidence in God.

But when we talk of faith let us know what we mean. Faith is not optimism, though it may breed optimism; it is not cheerfulness, though the man of faith is likely to be reasonably cheerful; it is not a vague sense of well-being nor a tender appreciation for the beauty of human togetherness. Faith is confidence in God's self-revelation as found in the Holy Scriptures.

"Faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God" (Rom. 10:17). Such true faith will purify, instruct, strengthen, enlighten and inform. The blessed man will meditate in the law of God day and night. To be entirely safe from evil snares the man of God must be completely obedient to the Word of the Lord. The driver on the highway is safe not when he *reads* the signs, but when he *obeys* them. So it is with the word of God. To be effective it must be obeyed.

### **Humility**

Again, there is a close relation between humility and the perception of truth. Said the Psalmist, "The meek

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***While the newspapers announce the news of the passing moment, the Bible proclaims the news for yesterday, today, and ages to come.***

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will he guide in judgment: and the meek will he teach his way" (Ps. 25:9). In the Scriptures we find no shred of encouragement for the proud. Only tame sheep can be led; only the humble child need expect the guidance of the Father's hand. When all the evidence is in it may well be found that none but the proud have strayed from the truth.

### **Serious Thought**

Then we must *think*. Human thought has its limitations, but where there is no thinking there is not likely to be any large deposit of truth in the mind. Evangelicals may generally be divided into two camps, those who trust the human intellect to the point of sheer rationalism, and those who are shy of everything intellectual and are convinced that thinking is almost a waste of the Christian's time. Surely both are wrong. Self-conscious intellectualism is offensive to man, and I am convinced to God also, but it is significant that every major revelation in the Scriptures was made to a man who thought great thoughts of God. It would be easy to marshal an imposing list of Biblical quotations exhorting us to think, but a more convincing argument is the whole drift of the Bible itself. The Scriptures simply take for granted that the saints of the Most High shall be serious-minded, thoughtful persons. They never leave the impression that it is sinful to think.

It is often said that regardless of our creed or faith we are all Christians together, all striving toward the same goal: all the roads lead to the city; all the rivers find the ocean. But do they? The premise as well as the conclusion is wrong. All roads do *not* lead to the city: many end in the wilderness; many are blind alleys; while others lead to destinations entirely foreign to our aims. All rivers do not end in the ocean: some end in swamps or desert sands or in Dead Seas. Nor do all faiths lead to God. Christ is not divided; God is not the author of confusion. "One Lord, one faith," said the apostle Paul. As for safety in following the majority, history has proved that the majority is usually wrong. There is a counterfeit Christianity as well as genuine.

Therefore if we wish to be true Christians, we must have our eyes open and choose our way carefully.

**T**HE question arises, What is it to be a Christian? The answer is simple enough: it is to be like Christ. Where, then, shall we turn for information concerning this Christ whom we are to copy? There is but one source of knowledge—the Bible. The four Gospels tell the story of His life, but by no means all His teaching. If we wish to learn the mind of Christ that we may arm ourselves with it, we will find ourselves studying the prophets whose words He confirmed, as well as the Apostles whom He commissioned and instructed.

### **The Bible Is True**

We rejoice today that God has not given to His children a Book full of confusion, but a book that is one divine harmony from cover to cover. The beautiful notes from the prophets, apostles and Jesus give no discord; it is one harmonious whole. It breathes the same spirit throughout. The blessed Volume does not ask of our hands a cowardly defense, but can be rigidly questioned as to everything upon which it ventures to speak. To all who will use it aright, it becomes a lamp to their feet and a light to their path. Its brightness

shines brighter and brighter unto the perfect Day. There is no other literature upon earth like it, for it contains thoughts higher, grander and nobler than the thoughts of man.

The Bible is up to date. While the newspapers and periodicals announce the news of the passing moment, the Bible proclaims the news for yesterday, today, and ages to come. Its predictions are certain, its promises sure. The Bible is not to blame for the many religious fables that men have attempted to read into it, and the fake theories that religious teachers claim emanated from its pages. God is not a God of confusion but a God of law and order, and “the law of the Lord is perfect, converting the soul: the testimony of the Lord is sure, making wise the simple” (Ps. 19:7).

The facts prove that the Bible is strictly up to date and that its prophecies and predictions are certain. What did Jesus say about the general attitude of mankind at the time He would return? “Nevertheless when the Son of man cometh, shall he find faith on the earth?” (Luke 18:8). Did not the same Jesus foretell: “But as the days of Noe were, so shall also the coming of the Son of man be. For as in the days that were before the flood they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day that Noe

## *Let Us Pray . . .*

Almighty and eternal God, Creator of the universe and Father of our spirits, we worship Thee. Far from us Thou art, and by the insensitiveness of our own evil hearts we too often keep Thee distant.

Grant to us in this hour of opportunity the grace of receptiveness, that into hospitable souls we may receive Thee, Thou God of goodness and truth. Cross the inner thresholds of our hearts, lay hold upon our faith, steady our faltering steps, and with such inner refreshment send us out to be good soldiers for Thee, that we may be equal to all the demands that shall be made upon us. And may our human efforts, bulwarked by Thy divine strength, be such as shall meet with Thy approval when we shall stand before the Judge.

Father, we recognize Thee as the Source of all true knowledge and wisdom. We marvel at Thy ability to know what is in each of our hearts. Search us, O God, and know our hearts; try us and know our thoughts;

and see if there be any wicked way in us, and lead us in the way everlasting.

Help us to be absolutely honest in evaluating our progress in the divine life, to stand aside and look critically at ourselves as we would look at another, conscious of our inborn tendency to judge others with rigor and ourselves with leniency. Help us to weigh carefully our every thought and motive, aware that sin in *our* hearts is just as sure of condemnation before the Judge as sin in another; but may we change while time is still extended us.

Help us to be rigorous in the standard that we demand of ourselves. Save us, we pray, from lapsing devotion, jealous thoughts, lukewarm concern and anemic faith. Teach us to withhold the tart remark, the subtle criticism, or any comment that might injure or defame another. And may our lives be above reproach, giving constant witness to the faith we profess, shining lights in a world of sin and darkness.

We ask Thy blessing on all Thy people wherever they may be; comfort, strengthen, encourage, give or withhold, as Thou seest our need, that we may be cleansed and purified from every stain of sin, and someday be accepted for an eternal place in Thy eternal Kingdom. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.

entered into the ark, and knew not until the flood came, and took them all away; so shall also the coming of the Son of man be" (Matt. 24:37-39). Does not the Bible plainly tell us the world's condition at the second advent of the Messiah? Listen again to the words Jesus uttered some nineteen hundred years ago: "As it was in the days of Lot; . . . even thus shall it be in the day when the Son of man is revealed" (Luke 17:28, 30).

What was the sin of Sodom and Gomorrah in the days of Lot? Immorality. See the world today sinking lower and lower into the depths of iniquity, until men now do evil with both hands earnestly, and womankind cease to blush. It is estimated that there is one divorce to every three marriages—in some areas the ratio is as low as one to two—and common-law marriages and worse are prevalent. What a fulfillment of the words of Paul: "This know also, that in the last days perilous times shall come. For men shall be lovers of their own selves, covetous, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents"—teenage delinquency is an example of the accurate fulfillment of this prophecy—"unthankful, unholy, without natural affection, trucebreakers, false accusers, incontinent, fierce, . . . heady, high-minded, lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God" (II Tim. 3:1-4).

Is not this true? Is not the Bible up to date? See the masses rushing for pleasure. See the movies, the drive-in theatres, pouring out their crowds. See family thought and attitudes being shaped not by parents and family traditions but by television and the mass media—it is reported that the average child, by the time he reaches adulthood, has spent more hours in front of the television screen than in the classroom.

See the restlessness among the nations, the lawlessness and the general opposition to authority. See the waste, the graft, the corruption among officials in high office. See the fear, unrest and perplexity on every hand, until the words of Jesus are proved true, "Men's hearts failing them for fear and for looking after those things which are coming on the earth." Military science has developed potential for total destruction that staggers the human mind—can we deny the words of Jesus? When we behold the dark picture does it not prove the Bible up to date, right to the very minute?

### **The Inspired, Infallible Word of God**

Whatever the opposition or ridicule, we stand firmly for an inspired, infallible Bible, without contradiction, absurdity or error. The Bible is the only authoritative guide for daily living. In these unsettled, troubled times, the need is for authority and leadership. Because of this deep human need, men are turning in desperation to

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### ***Always be ready to change for the better.***

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Communism and other forms of totalitarian government, to their own sorrow. We need a better authority than any man has created. Human standards are too elastic, too changeable; right and wrong are too often determined by time and geography. Today's sin is tomorrow's accepted practice. The human conscience is not a trustworthy guide, because it is one hundred per cent a creature of education. The Bible alone provides a code of ethics and rules of behavior adapted to every age, yet unchanged throughout the centuries. Indeed, the benefits of Bible faith and practice are tremendous.

Nominal Christianity, in its long career, has taken some strange turns, and some wrong ones. It started out all right, for it began with Christ, the greatest piece of manhood this world has ever known. But the shadow of Rome gradually eclipsed the simple teachings of the Galilean. The apostate church claimed a form of other-worldliness, with no interest in this present life; but both the mental attitudes and the methods were wrong. Those were the great days of monasticism. Instead of grappling with the evils of the flesh and overcoming them in a manly fashion, men and women flocked by thousands to monasteries, convents, and desert retreats, there to live out their lives in solitary confinement. Doctrines were thoroughly paganized in order to gain converts, while social injustice and filth of all kinds, mental, moral and physical, were protected under the cloak of religion, which became the opiate of the people.

That, you say, was a long time ago. So it was, yet some of these same conditions might be found in portions of our world until this day. However, in our own land the pendulum has swung to the other extreme. Religion now has ceased to be religious. The church has ceased to be a spiritual force or a way of salvation, and has become merely an agency of social service, with no insistence on purity of doctrine and no hope of a future life. The result as we see it is exactly what it was bound to be: no individual righteousness and very little public benefit, as the present debacle demonstrates.

The primary emphasis should be on individual purity. No society can rise higher than its members. When individual men conform to the Divine standard of holiness, social conditions will right themselves. No social



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program, however nobly conceived and phrased, can take the place of personal integrity.

The religion of Jesus Christ is first and last a religion of salvation. Only the hope of eternal life will induce men and women to deny themselves, take up their cross and follow the steps of the Master. In many religious circles today "reward morality" is condemned as being beneath the consideration of intelligent people. But whatever men in their ignorance may call it, the plane of "reward morality" is the plane on which Christ Himself walked, and we shall do well to follow on the same level, which is far higher than anything the wisdom of man has produced. "Thou shalt be recompensed," said Jesus, "as you go through life, simply by the joy of doing good"? No. "Thou shalt be recompensed at the resurrection of the just" (Luke 14:14). Let the author of the book of Hebrews answer: "Looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith; who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God" (Heb. 12:2); not simply for the joy of doing good, although that too was a pleasure; but for the future, eternal joy of reigning in His Father's throne, as a reward for having overcome (Rev. 3:21). So if we live the Christ-life, it will be by the same stimulus, the joy set before us to be bestowed at the resurrection of the just.

### **To Be Understood, Truth Must be Lived**

Truth, to be understood, must be lived. Bible doctrine is wholly ineffective until it has been digested and assimilated by the total life. This is an important element in the preaching of the Old Testament prophets, and it is near to the heart of the moral teaching of our Lord Jesus Christ. This is one of those truths which to many may appear dull and colorless. But far from being tame or weak, this truth is of tremendous importance to all of us. While not to my knowledge formulated as a tenet in the creed of any church or school of religious thought, it nevertheless stands as a great divide to separate those who think rightly about the faith of Christ, from those who think carelessly about it.

There is a difference, a vast difference, between fact and truth. Truth in the Scriptures is more than fact. A fact may be detached, impersonal, cold, and totally disassociated from life. Truth, on the other hand, is warm, living, spiritual. A theological fact may be held in the mind for a lifetime without its having positive effect upon the moral character; but truth is creative, saving, transforming, and always changes the one who receives it into a humbler and holier man.

At what point, then, does a theological fact become for the one who holds it a life-giving truth? At the point where obedience begins. When faith gains the consent of the will to make an irrevocable commitment to Christ as Lord, truth begins its saving, illuminating work; and not one moment before.

In His conflict with the religious leaders of His day our Lord often uttered short statements that serve as keys to unlock precious storehouses of truth. In the Gospel according to John these may be found in something amounting to profusion. One such is found in John 7: "If any man will do his will, he shall know of the doctrine, whether it be of God, or whether I speak of myself" (v. 17). We must be willing to obey, if we would know the true inner meaning of the teachings of Christ and the apostles. A living Christian may be distinguished from a dead one by his attitude toward the truth. The man who is spiritually dead holds the shell of truth without surrendering to the will of God, while the person who wills to do God's bidding shows spiritual progress.

Religious facts are like the altar of Elijah on Carmel before the fire came: correct, properly laid out, but altogether cold. When the heart makes the ultimate surrender, the fire falls and true facts are transmuted into spiritual truth that transforms, enlightens, sanctifies. Truth cannot aid us until we become participants in it. We only possess what we experience.

A cleric who lived in the fourteenth century, taught that understanding and participation were inseparable in the spiritual life. He said: "He who seeks to understand commandments without fulfilling commandments, and to acquire such understanding through learning and reading, is like a man who takes a shadow for truth. For the understanding of truth is given to those who have become participants in truth (who have tasted it through living). Those who are not participants in truth and are not initiated therein, when they seek this understanding, draw it from a distorted wisdom. Of such men the apostle says, 'the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit,' even though they boast of their knowledge of truth." How meaningful are these words.

Let us, as consistent followers of Christ, accept His



teachings in full, including this great principle that truth must be lived, or cease to call ourselves Christians. We are forbidden to add to or take from the law of God. If we are to be a church, let us be a church; if a club or fraternal order, let us be frankly that, and cease to use the name of the Christ whose precepts we reject.

### **How To Obtain the Benefits**

The first step toward this salvation which Christ offers us is the same as the first step in mastering any other subject—knowledge. This knowledge is gained by study. The musician studies music; the lawyer studies law; the physician, medicine. The Christian, then, must study his textbook, the Bible. Too often religion is confused with an emotional state; but it is a matter for straight, clear thinking, a matter of cause and effects, of reason and common sense.

The second step is to put the acquired knowledge into practice just as the musician must actually practice upon his instrument, and the surgeon perform actual operations in order to become proficient. These two steps lie within our capabilities, and they are ours to take; no one can or will do the work for us.

Naturally this work involves discipline and self-denial. All good things are like that. The question is sure to be asked, "What is the advantage of all this? What do I get out of it? As a business-like person, I must be convinced that the way of Christ pays."

That is true; the question is fair enough. Jesus Himself told us to count the cost before undertaking the work. We must show that it pays. We have already proved that Christianity is essentially a religion of salvation, but its Founder also promised its followers a hundredfold in this present life (Matt. 19:27-29). This hundredfold is very real and tangible, once we bring ourselves to recognize and accept it.

There are many, many advantages in the narrow way. Our faith gives us, first of all, a solid foundation under our feet, something very important to a generation reared in an atmosphere of uncertainty and instability, when old foundations have crumbled with nothing to take their place. Second, it gives us a light which penetrates the fog of present troubles. No matter how dark the picture grows, we are not afraid, for we know what it all means. Is not this an advantage? We see the conditions foretold in the Bible prevailing in the world today, and we know this is the prelude to a better time.

Therefore, though the nations rush with a kind of madness to their own destruction, we have no fears, for the same Bible that pictures these troublous times portrays also, just beyond the shadows, a time of enduring

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***Bible doctrine is wholly ineffective until it has been digested and assimilated by the total life.***

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peace, when the song of the angels at the birth of Christ, "Peace on earth, good will to men," shall be fulfilled for the first time on this troubled planet. Micah the prophet beautifully pictures this golden age as the time when "they shall sit every man under his vine and . . . fig tree, and none shall make them afraid: for the mouth of the Lord of hosts hath spoken it" (Mic. 4:1-4).

Now there is very little real justice to be found; there is poverty, corruption, oppression, social inequality everywhere. In that future day there will be equal justice and opportunity for all, and the words of Isaiah will come true: "And her merchandise and her hire shall be holiness to the Lord: it shall not be treasured nor laid up; for her merchandise shall be for them that dwell before the Lord, to eat sufficiently, and for durable clothing" (Isa. 23:18). There is enough for all now, but in that day there will be proper distribution of the bounties of nature, and poverty shall be wiped out—a wonderful benefit and advantage.

In this life we are always faced by the possibility of sickness or accident; but a time is coming when "the inhabitant shall not say, I am sick" (Isa. 33:24). More than that, Death, the great enemy which ends all earthly hopes, and under whose dark shadow we live our little lives, shall be no more.

"And I heard a great voice out of heaven saying, Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and he will dwell with them, and they shall be his people, and God himself shall be with them, and be their God. And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away. And he that sat upon the throne said, Behold, I make all things new. And he said unto me, Write: for these words are true and faithful" (Rev. 21:3-5).

This text describes the blissful state which is the result of the third step in God's salvation. It is a step which we ourselves cannot take, the redemption of our physical body, the change to immortality. This is the goal and object of it all. Is it not a great advantage to

have such a hope to sustain us through life?

Bible faith and practice take away disappointment. The world is full of disappointed people. Those who have pinned their faith on democratic ideals of government are disheartened as they see the few remaining democracies of the world fighting for their very existence against the rising tide of Communism, militarism, brutality. Principle among nations, never very noticeable, has nearly vanished, and the weak are shamelessly betrayed by the strong. But these conditions do not disappoint us, for we see in them a fulfillment of the words of the inspired writers.

Bible faith and practice makes us happy. True Christianity is the eternal foe of the long face, because it gives us a radiant hope. It lifts us above the bondage of everyday things; it frees us from slavery to tradition, from slavery to the mob. No man or woman ever amounted to anything whose thoughts and actions were dictated by the crowd. Truth and freedom are not found with the many in the broad way which leads to destruction, but with the few in the narrow way to life. Our faith stands us on our feet like men and women, independent, strong and lighthearted in the knowledge that we have only to work out our own salvation, rule ourselves, and make our part of the world better by our lives, and let the nations go their own way, knowing the Almighty will deal with them in due time. It is enough for us to aspire to the greatest of all ideals, the one unchanged since the beginning of time:

"Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect."

MM

### **My Bible and I**

*We've traveled together, my Bible and I,  
Through all kinds of weather with smile or with sigh;  
In sorrow or sunshine, in tempest or calm,  
Thy friendship unchanging, my lamp and my psalm.*

*We've traveled together, my Bible and I,  
When life had grown weary and death e'en was nigh;  
But all through the darkness of mist or of wrong,  
I found there a solace, a prayer, and a song.*

*So now who shall part us, my Bible and I?  
Shall isms or schisms or new lights who try?  
Shall shadow for substance or stone for good bread  
Supplant thy sound wisdom, give folly instead?*

*Oh, no! My dear Bible, exponent of light,  
Thou sword of the spirit, put error to flight.  
And still through life's journey until my last sigh,  
We'll travel together, my Bible and I.*

## **Self-Denial Week**

The week beginning Sunday, February 2, 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.

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. Controlling our appetites is another—though small—aspect of this self-government. Every mental, moral and physical aspect of our lives must be brought under the supervision 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.

## **Applied Christianity**

*(Continued from page 2)*

(found in Mark 4:24-25): "Take heed what ye hear: with what measure ye mete, it shall be measured to you: and unto you that hear shall more be given." It was a lesson in Applied Discernment.

The last night before the crucifixion, when the disciples were all gathered in the upper room, they were arguing quietly among themselves which should be the greatest. What was Jesus' answer? The great of this world worry about such things, He said. But "Ye shall not be so: but he that is greatest among you, let him be as the younger; and he that is chief, as he that doth serve" (Luke 22:26). It was a lesson in Applied Humility, a humility that is more ready to serve than to be seen!

Yes, Christ is not passive and mild. He came bringing law, a law that must be applied if we would obtain the benefits that it can give. Without the application, it was of no value.

MM



# Every Day, Every Day

## The Meaning of Joy

The fruit of the Spirit is . . . joy (Gal. 5:22)

True Christian joy reaches out to bless, to scatter happiness, and to inspire hope.

One of the great biblical insights into the meaning of joy is highlighted in the words, "to give unto them beauty for ashes, the oil of joy for mourning" (Isa. 61:3). In ancient times oil represented healing, but we now associate it most often with machinery. What oil is to the mechanical world, joy is to the machinery of life.

Oil is necessary to reduce friction and keep the mechanical world operational. An automobile has a crankcase with enough oil to bathe the moving parts of the motor continuously while the engine is running. If the oil gets too low, the temperature of the motor shoots up, the bearings are ruined, and the motor is a total loss.

The joy of the Lord is like oil in the mechanical world. It lubricates the machinery of life to keep every aspect of it running smoothly and efficiently. It cuts out friction in the pressure of living. When joy saturates our words they become tender and compassionate.

When interpersonal relationships are rough, a little touch of joy eases the pressure, and smooths out the friction.

May we keep the oil of joy at the "full" mark so the machinery of life works at maximum efficiency with minimum friction.

## When We Let Go

"I BESEECH you . . . that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service" (Rom. 12:1). An amazing discovery comes when we present our bodies a living sacrifice to God. We show our craving for sanctity and spiritual excellence by letting the Lord know that we are willing to give up, let go of, and die to anything and everything that is contrary to His will.

Any false pride that swells in selfish ambition, any envy that eats like a cancer, any cowardice that toys with compromise is utterly repudiated. This yieldedness is shown when we erect a YIELD sign to the Lord's will along the highway of our life. The moment we know His plan, the right-of-way is yielded to Him. His will comes first, and our plans follow along. We put ourselves at the disposal of the Lord and become expendable for Him. Our will is fused with His will, our designs are parallel to His designs, our plans are in line with His plans.

Total obedience, total commitment, and total devotion to Him hold us under His absolute sway. Our highest aspiration is,

*All to Jesus I surrender,  
All my being's latent powers,  
All my thoughts and words and doings,  
All my days and all my hours.*

"Everyday with Paul," by Mendell Taylor. Copyright 1978 by Beacon Hill Press of Kansas City; used by permission.

## For Those Who Are

# Worried Sick and Sick of Worrying

**A**CCORDING to a certain doctor, 50 percent of all the people seeking medical help in the United States are victims of one disease, a disorder which he defines as "psychoneurosis" which according to him is caused by "acute anxiety."

Others tell us that from 50 to 70 percent of all illnesses are caused by mental distress or worry. Worry has been listed by heart specialists as the number one cause of heart trouble. All of us are familiar with the phrase, "worried sick," but how many of us seriously consider the effect worry has upon us?

The Gypsies say that a sad man is a sick man, and that sickness is the result of worry. The Greeks described worry as opposing forces at work to tear man apart. The Saxons likened worry to a vicious animal clutching at a man's throat, like a wolf strangling a sheep. The word worry derives from an old Anglo-Saxon verb *wyrgan* which means "to choke or strangle." Worry chokes our physical strength, our creative powers, our spiritual growth, and the joy of life.

When Sir Walter Raleigh was burdened with a huge debt, his doctor said to him, "Sir Walter, if you don't stop worrying, you will die." He looked up sadly, and said, "I can't help worrying as long as that debt is over my head. It may kill

me, but you might as well tell my cook to order the water in the kettle not to boil as to command my brain not to worry."

Anxiety is the rust of life, destroying its brightness and weakening its power. Worry is a thin stream of fear trickling through the mind. If encouraged, it cuts a channel into which all other thoughts are drained. Men call worry a minor fault, a foible and not a vice. But there is no vice which can more effectively, utterly destroy the peace and happiness of a home.

What does God say about worry? The Bible clearly commands us not to worry. The Psalmist admonished us to "Fret not." But Jesus had most to say about this dreadful disease. In (Matt. 6:25-34) He said to His hearers,

"I tell you, therefore, do not worry about your life, about what you are to eat, or what you are to drink; and do not worry about your body, about what you are to wear. Is not your life more than food, and your body more than clothes? Look at the birds of the air, and see that they do not sow or reap, or gather things into storehouses, and yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not better than they? Who of you can add one span to his life by worrying about it? And why do you worry about clothes? Learn a

lesson from the lilies of the field, from the way in which they grow. They do not toil or spin; but I tell you that not even Solomon in all his glory was clothed like one of these. If God so clothes the grass of the field, which exists today, and which is thrown into the oven tomorrow, shall He not much more clothe you, O you of little faith? So then do not worry, saying, What are we to eat? or, What are we to drink? or, What are we to wear? The Gentiles seek after all these things. But seek first His Kingdom and His righteousness, and all these things will come to you in addition. So, then, do not worry about tomorrow; tomorrow will worry about itself. Its own troubles are quite enough for the day."

Jesus is not forbidding ordinary, prudent foresight. He is forbidding *worry*. Jesus is not advocating a shiftless, thriftless, reckless, thoughtless, improvident attitude to life; He is forbidding a careworn, worried fear, which takes all the joy out of life.

Jesus was saying, "Do not worry anxiously."

Jesus goes on to advance a very fundamental argument against worry. Worry, He says, is characteristic of a heathen, a nonbeliever, not of one who knows God. Worry is essentially distrust of God. Such a



distrust may be understandable in a heathen who believes in a jealous, capricious, unpredictable god; but it is beyond comprehension in one who has learned to call God by the name of Father. The Christian cannot worry because he believes that God will be true to His Word when He says, "I will never leave thee nor forsake thee."

Jesus tells us two ways to defeat worry. The first is to "seek . . . first" the Kingdom of God. Concentrate on accepting and doing the will of God. This will defeat worry.

We know how in everyday life one concern can make every other less. We know also how a great love can drown every lesser love. It was Jesus' conviction that worry can be banished in the same way: by making God the dominating power of our lives.

Jesus knew also that we can defeat worry by learning to live one day at a time. He would have us handle the demands of each day as it comes, without worrying about the unknown future and the things which may never happen.

Worry is needless, useless and even actively injurious. Worry cannot affect the past, for the past is past. Worry affects a man's judgment, lessens his powers of decision, and renders him progressively incapable of dealing with life. The best prevention: give your best to every situation as it comes—you cannot give more—and leave the rest with God.

Yes, the Bible clearly commands us not to worry. This may seem like an impossible commandment to keep, but God does not give us a commandment without giving also the ability to obey it.

There are four basic steps to overcoming the plague of worry:

First you must invest your time in constructive thought rather than idle, worthless imagining. Proverbs

6:6 compares the wise man with the ant. An ant does not waste its time worrying about the future but instead is constantly working to prepare for it. One of the best cures for worry is work. "It is not work that kills men," wrote Henry Ward Beecher, "it is worry." Do not sit and fret over your problems—get up and start working towards a solution! Occupy your time and your mind with something creative and productive.

Second you must concentrate on filling your needs, not your wants.

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**Said the robin to the sparrow,  
"I should really like to know  
Why these anxious human beings  
Rush about and worry so."**

**Said the sparrow to the robin,  
"Friend, I think that it must be  
That they have no heavenly Father  
Such as cares for you and me."**

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In Philippians 4:19, God promises to supply all our needs if we will depend upon Him, but He never promises to supply all our wants. It is true, Psalm 37:4 promises that God will give us the desires of our hearts, but this assumes that our hearts have become subject to the will of God.

Sociologists reported a few years ago that at the beginning of the twentieth century the average American wanted seventy-two things and considered eighteen of them important. Fifty years later, the "want list" had grown to 496, of which ninety-six were considered necessary to happiness. Perhaps our greatest problem is discerning the true necessities of life. The apostle Paul identified only two: "And having food and raiment let us be

therewith content" (I Tim. 6:8).

The third thing you must do is concentrate on today instead of on yesterday and tomorrow. Concerning the past, we are advised to "forget those things which are past." Concerning the future, Jesus said, "Do not worry about tomorrow. . . . Each day has enough trouble of its own" (Matt. 6:34, NIV).

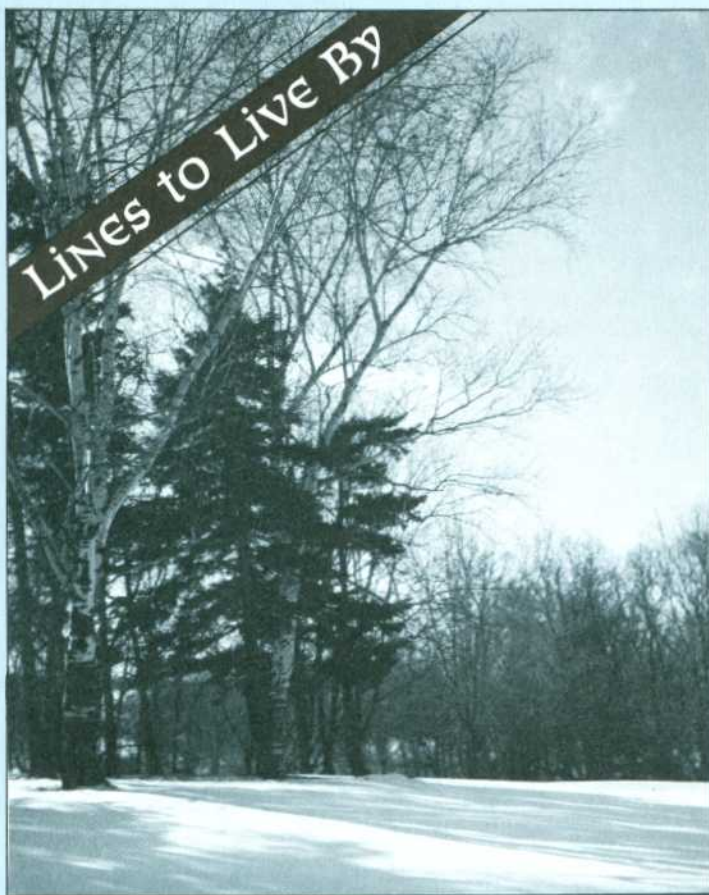
An ocean liner is built so that the captain can, by pressing a button, lower steel doors separating one watertight bulkhead from another. If the hull is pierced in a disaster, this keeps the ship afloat. In the same way we need to learn how, as someone has suggested, "to make doors come down and shut out the yesterdays with all their errors and failures. Learn also to lower another door to shut out the unborn tomorrows so that you can live for this day alone. As you move into the next bulkhead, close doors that will shut out both the past and future."

Finally, you must focus your thoughts on God instead of on your problems. Isaiah put it like this, "Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on thee . . ." (Isaiah 26:3).

What are you worried sick about? Financial failure, domestic discord, occupational obligations, health problems, unavoidable uncertainties . . . ? The advice is still the same, *focus your thoughts on God instead of on your problems.*

We might paraphrase Jesus' words this way: When you see the lilies spinning in distress, taking thought to manufacture loveliness; when you see the birds all building barns to store, then it will be time for you to worry—not before. MM

**What wisdom can you find  
that is greater than kindness?**



### Remember . . .

The value of time  
 The success of perseverance  
 The pleasure of working  
 The dignity of simplicity  
 The worth of character  
 The power of kindness  
 The influence of example  
 The obligation of duty  
 The wisdom of economy  
 The virtue of patience  
 The improvement of talent  
 The joy of originating.

—Unknown

There is a time, I know not when,  
 A place, I know not where,  
 Which marks the destiny of men  
 For happiness or despair.

There is a line, by us not seen,  
 Which crosses every path;  
 The hidden boundary between  
 God's patience and God's wrath.

To cross that limit is to die,  
 To die as if by stealth;  
 It may not pale the beaming eye  
 Nor quench the glowing health.

The conscience may be still at ease,  
 The spirit light and gay;  
 That which is pleasing still may please,  
 And care be thrust away.

But on that forehead God hath set  
 Indelibly a mark  
 By man unseen, for man as yet  
 Is blind and in the dark.

How long may man go on in sin  
 How long will God forbear?  
 Where does hope end, and where begin  
 The confines of despair?

One answer from the skies is sent:  
 Ye who from God depart;  
 While it is yet today, repent  
 And harden not your heart!

—Selected

### Memory

*MEMORY is the first tool of the thinking mind; its training is the earliest task of the school child; and its use is the irreplaceable asset of learned men.*

—Author Unknown



## Thou Mighty God

*Thou Mighty God, who rules above,  
What words can we, poor earthborns, frame  
To honor Thee, and show our love  
And reverence due to Thy great Name?  
Hear us, as now we bow to Thee  
And own Thy power, Thy majesty.*

*For oh! The depths, the riches, both  
Of wisdom, knowledge of our God,  
Unsearchable Thy judgments are,  
Thy ways past finding out, O Lord!  
Thy greatness, none can comprehend,  
Thy mighty works none understand.*

*From everlasting Thou art God,  
To everlasting still the same.  
Let man his haughty head abase,  
And all Thy works declare Thy fame;  
Yea, come and kneel beneath His throne,  
For He, our God, is God alone.*

*Almighty One, Creator, God,  
Thy presence fills all things in space.  
Thou, Lord, didst make the creature man,  
And marked out his appointed place.  
Thy power, Thy wisdom infinite  
Hath filled this universe with light.*

*We look above on starlit night  
In awe and wonder as we view  
Thy myriad orbs that greet our sight,  
Bright jewels, studding all the blue,  
Each moving in its circling way,  
In unison and harmony.*

*What mighty hand each star did frame?  
Who clothed them all with radiant light?  
Who calleth each one by its name,  
And spreads them out to mortal sight?  
What hand holds each 'neath its control,  
While ever on the cycles roll?*

*What mighty power calls forth the sun,  
The glorious sovereign of the sky?  
Whence comes the light by which it shines?  
What hand supports it there on high?  
Who lifts the curtain of the day,  
And drives the shades of night away?*

*How truly do the heavens declare  
The wonders of God's power and might,  
The worlds on worlds, unnumbered there,  
Revealed to man's poor, finite sight;  
And far beyond what eye can see,  
They still revolve, a boundless sea.*

*Remember now what He hath done,  
His wisdom and His marvelous works;  
He is the Lord, and He alone;  
His judgments are in all the earth.  
Oh! Spread abroad His matchless fame,  
And praise the greatness of His name.*

*O bless the Lord, ye hosts above,  
That in His glorious strength excel,  
Yea, bless the Lord, all ye His works,  
In every place where He doth dwell  
He woundeth, and He maketh whole,  
Bless God thy Maker, O my soul.*

## Points for the Month

- Week 1:** Attack evil at its source. Forget the cobweb, kill the spider.
- Week 2:** Spiritual thinking is the practiced art of those who have tuned their mind with the infinite.
- Week 3:** Humidity makes plants grow, humility makes men grow.
- Week 4:** The servant must be extra careful during his Lord's absence.

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## “For God So Loved the World”— What World?

A MAN stood on the corner of a city street preaching to a small group of people who had stopped to listen. A passerby happened along just in time to hear the speaker saying: “John 3:16 is good enough for me.” Whatever our reaction to religion administered from the street corner, if learned in the ways of the professedly religious world, we must agree that to many people Jesus’ words—“God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life”—are the epitome of the Christian hope.

Now Jesus’ words recorded in John 3:16 are a part of the Gospel, a part of the Word of God, and as such must be believed by all who profess to know God. We have no right to discount their truthfulness. However, to accept the prevalent belief that God loves all mankind equally, saint and sinner alike, is to completely disregard the declaration of prophet, apostle, and Jesus Himself, and the repeatedly attested truths throughout the entire Bible.

When giving advice on financial matters, the professional economist lists for his client the factors for and against the proposition under consideration. It is the fairest way to proceed. So before we conclude that we understand the meaning of

any passage of Scripture, we should study that text and compare our prospective answer with all the related teachings of the Bible; in other words, list all the factors for and against, employing the rules of Scripture recommended by the Divine writers.

### A World God Does *Not* Love

Applying this plan of study to John 3:16, let us first see if there are any segments of the human family which God does not love. Yes, there *are* such people living in the world today, and there were such people living both before and after the dawn of the Christian Era. We read, “God is angry [indignant] with the wicked every day” (Ps. 7:11). Now love and indignation are opposite emotions. God could not love a class of people with whom He is vexed. God has “no pleasure in fools,” and “anger resteth in the bosom of fools” (Eccl. 5:4; 7:9), hence He does not love angry people.

In Noah’s time the Flood was brought in upon the world of the ungodly (II Pet. 2:5). *That is one world which God did not love.* Further, God did not love that portion of the world made up of the wicked inhabitants of Sodom and Gomorrah. Upon the angel’s promise, ten righteous persons would have saved the city; but only Lot,

his wife and two daughters were worthy of deliverance—and Lot’s wife looked back and lost her life. *God did not love those wicked cities.*

God abhors hypocrisy and insincerity. He did not love the dissemblers among the inhabitants of Judah whose loyalty to the cause of the Eternal was feigned and insincere. The Eternal’s message to them through Isaiah was: “To what purpose is the multitude of your sacrifices unto me? saith the Lord: I am full of the burnt offerings of rams, and the fat of fed beasts; . . . When ye come to appear before me, who hath required this at your hand, to tread my courts? Bring no more vain oblations; incense is an abomination unto me; the new moons and sabbaths, the calling of assemblies, I cannot away with; it is iniquity, even the solemn meeting” (Isa. 1:11-13). “I cannot away with” or “endure” your devotions. Now that is strong language. *There was one section of the world God did not love.*

In Jesus’ own day there were people God did not love. Nearly all of Matthew 23 is devoted to a scathing denunciation of the hypocritical Pharisees. Jesus denounced them as “whited sepulchres, which indeed appear beautiful outward, but are within full of dead men’s bones, and of all uncleanness”; as a



cup and a platter washed clean on the outside but filthy within; as paying tithe of "mint, and anise and cummin," while omitting the "weightier matters of the law, judgment, mercy and faith." *Rest assured that neither Jesus nor His heavenly Father loved that part of the world.*

Dwight L. Moody, the internationally known revivalist of the nineteenth century, was a staunch believer in a God who loves all mankind. At the close of his discourses he would sometimes employ a simple device to depict what he thought was the breadth and depth of God's love. Picking up the pitcher of water provided for the speaker, he would fill the drinking glass about a third full. He would then remark, "Some people think God's love is this much." Then filling the glass to two thirds he would say, "Some think it is this much." He would fill the glass and continue pouring until the water had run copiously over onto the floor, with the words, "I think it is this much."

To the people who agree with Mr. Moody and are confident that God loves the world, good, bad and indifferent, it may be jolting to be reminded that Jesus would not even pray for the world. In His prayer for His disciples on the night of the betrayal, just prior to the end, He said: "I pray not for the world, but for them which thou hast given me; for they are thine" (John 17:9). *God would not love a world for which Jesus would not pray.*

God does not love those who hate Him. He did not love those who hated Jesus when on earth nor does He love those today who hate His words or the living truth as taught in the Bible. Surely God did not love that portion of the wicked world who cruelly took the life of His beloved Son. The fact that He resurrected Him on the third day proved that.

In Prov. 28:9 we read of a man whom God does not love: "He that turneth away his ear from hearing the law, even his prayer shall be abomination."

In a certain sense, honor and love are related terms. In the days of the boy Samuel, a man of God was sent to Eli the high priest to reprove him for "winking" at the gross sins of his sons who were then filling the office of active priests. After these sins were enumerated to Eli, he was given the ultimatum: "Them that honour me I will honour, and they that despise me shall be lightly esteemed" (I Sam. 2:30). Obviously God does not love this present evil world. He wishes us delivered from it (Gal. 1:4).

In chapter 2 of John's First Epistle we are commanded not to love the world, and in II Cor. 6:17-18 Paul adjured the Church at Corinth to "*come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord.*" Surely God would not love a world that He commanded us not to love and to separate ourselves from.

### **What World Does God Love?**

God loves the world of believers, those who will hear and do His commandments. His love flows out to those whom He foreknows will be attracted to His following, and He arranges the circumstances so they can know of the doctrine. God loves that world of men and women who will separate themselves from this present evil world, from all that is defiling; that world known in Scriptural terminology as "the world to come" (Heb. 2:5). Included in this future world are the 144,000 who stand on Mount Zion with Jesus, after the Resurrection and Judgment, and the great number which no man can number to be taken out during the thousand-year day of rest (Rev. 7:9; 20:4).

Speaking through the voice of

Wisdom, God declares: "I love them that love me; and those that seek me early shall find me" (Prov. 8:17). Now here is a world God loves, the world composed of those who love Him. He loves those who do as He commands them. He loves those whose business is His business, whose interests are His interests, whose tastes are like His, and who strive to be like Him in purity and moral excellence.

The patriarch Abraham was so careful to maintain a good relationship with God that he was called "the Friend of God." That is a very warm term. One's next of kin may become utterly estranged, may utterly fail him in the time of dire need; but a friend, never. Hence, if one is a part of the world that God loves, if he maintains such happy relationship with God as to be His friend, that relationship will assure him of God's favor forever, and that indeed satisfies man's highest longings.

Long before the days of labor unions, craftsmen were drawn together in workers' guilds. A strong bond of mutual interest and friendship existed between them. And today the thought of a friend giving a lift when the work at hand is pressing always strikes a responsive chord. God also loves "workers together with him" (II Cor. 6:1). To love all mankind in the same way that He loves those who are "workers together with Him" would be contradictory to His nature. God cannot go against Himself and love His enemies. Doing so would make Him a liar, and it is "impossible for God to lie."

Daniel, the illustrious prophet among the captives in Babylon, was addressed by the angel Gabriel as a man "greatly beloved." Why? Because of his righteous life and godly deportment in the midst of that corrupt city. Daniel was "greatly beloved" because he had done the

things to make himself a part of the world that God loves.

In John 14:21, in one trenchant statement, Jesus describes this world that God loves: "He that hath my commandments, and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me: and he that loveth me shall be loved of my Father, and I will love him, and will manifest myself to him." This definition is too clear to admit of cavil. "He that hath my commandments, and keepeth them, . . . shall be loved of my Father." God's love is always conditional.

### What Is It to Believe in Jesus?

God "gave His only begotten Son that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish but have everlasting life." What is it to believe in Jesus? The term *believe* has broad coverage. Believing and acting on one's belief are qualities that are inseparable. If one truly believes, he will act. If he does not act, belief is lacking. To believe, in a Bible sense, is to apply one's belief to his daily living. If a man says he believes in Thomas Jefferson, the early American statesman, what does he mean? He means he believes in the principles advocated by Thomas Jefferson. But if he worked contrary to those principles, would anyone think he believed in Jefferson? Likewise, to believe in Jesus is to believe and practice all that He taught. Jesus taught absolute purity of character as the key to salvation (Matt. 5:8). He demanded of His followers a holy, sinless life, a righteousness that far exceeds the righteousness of the professors of religion (Matt. 5:48, 20). Jesus again said: "Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven" (Matt. 7:21). To believe in Christ one must honestly conform to the Golden Rule, must do to others as

he would be done by. He must trust implicitly in God and maintain an attitude of helpfulness toward his fellow man.

Again, to believe in Jesus we must believe the doctrines that He taught. The great burden of His teaching concerned His role as future King of the entire earth. He preached it wherever He went. He emphasized it in parable, allegory and direct statement. Mortals here who qualify for immortal life shall inherit the earth as their eternal home (Matt. 5:5). Christ Himself should ascend to heaven and be seated at the Father's right hand, from whence He would return to judge the living and the dead; but no one could go to heaven where He was going (John 14:3; 13:33). Upon His return He would bring His reward with Him so that both living and dead should receive their reward together (Rev. 22:12; I Thess. 4:15-17). Therefore, people who believe contrary to this, those who hold to the widely accepted theory of an immortal soul leaving the body and going immediately to heaven at death are not believing in Jesus, hence cannot qualify for God's love.

We learn from the context in which John 3:16 occurs that believing in Jesus covers more than the mere conviction that a very good man named Jesus once lived. In fact, the very context shows that believing and acting are inseparable. Verses 17, 18, 20, 21 reveal that God's love, His acceptance or rejection, depends upon each individual. "For God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through him might be saved." However, God foreknew that not all mankind would believe in Him; many would prefer darkness to light, and this would assure their condemnation. "And this is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men loved dark-

ness rather than light, because their deeds were evil. For every one that doeth evil hateth the light, neither cometh to the light, lest his deeds should be reproved." *God never loved a class of people whom He condemned.* "But he that doeth truth cometh to the light, that his deeds may be made manifest, that they are wrought in God." *These form the world that God loves.*

### The World of Believers

We often hear it said of a group of people who have interests all their own, that they are a world in themselves. Their special interests so dominate their lives that they are practically oblivious to what is taking place around them. It is said that Thomas Edison during his lifetime was so absorbed with his inventing that he was wholly unconscious of the time of day, and it was difficult to get him to leave his work long enough to eat his meals. The complete engrossment of the presidential candidates during a national election is another evidence of the case in point. Likewise true believers are all wrapped up in their "world," in their love for God and their determination to win the prize of life and immortality which He has offered them.

In more than one instance through the Gospels, Jesus' teaching reveals the fervor which this class-consciousness will engender. In Matt. 6:33 He commands: "But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness." True believers will put first things first. Again, in Luke 16:16 we read, "The law and the prophets were until John: since that time the kingdom of God is preached, and every man presseth into it."

*Presseth into it.* These words denote action, action generated by a well-defined purpose. The parallel passage in Matthew's gospel employs

the term "violence": the "violent take it [the kingdom] by force." The Moffatt Bible translates this passage: "From the time of John the Baptist until now, they are pressing into the realm of heaven—these eager souls are storming it" (Matt. 11:12). *Storming it*—here is action with jet-engine thrust behind it. These eager souls are storming their way into the Kingdom of Christ.

The apostle Paul, one of the greatest believers of all time, revealed his fervor for the Christian cause in the words: "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" (Phil. 3:13-14).

In Jesus' post-ascension message to the seven churches, and to us, He warns: "Come out of her [Babylon], my people, that ye be not partakers of her sins, and that ye receive not of her plagues" (Rev. 18:4). These "eager souls," alert to the danger of delay, will get out of Babylon—everything that belongs to the present system of evil which God condemns, all the words and ways of the great mass of worldlings who throng the broad road to destruction. And they will not walk away leisurely either, but, to borrow a thought from the prophet Jeremiah, they will "flee out of . . . Babylon," and "deliver every man his soul," lest they be cut off in her iniquity.

The breadth of God's love for the world to come is revealed in another thought in Jesus' prayer for His disciples: "Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also which shall believe on me through their word" (John 17:20). God not only loves the world of believers who have lived during the six-thousand-year day in which He has taken out the "kings and priests" for Christ's

Kingdom, but He has also planned that His love should extend to an unrevealed number of saved ones who, believing in God "through their word," shall form the populace of that glorious world to come.

Yes indeed, every *believer*, every one who confirms his belief or faith

by works of righteousness, shall be saved; for "God so loved the world [to come], that he gave his only begotten Son [as Teacher, Example, and King] that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life."

Let us labor earnestly to be part of that world God loves. MM

## While Zion Beckons

*THE SINS that now beset us we must quickly overcome,  
And, laying off each clinging weight, the race with fleetness run;  
Enduring hardships as we go, though they be few and light  
Compared with those the saints endured before the long, dark night.  
The thirteen evils of St. Mark must all be cast aside,  
The anger, hate, and jealousy, the stubbornness and pride.  
The roots of bitterness dug up, and then destroyed,  
And by those petty trials we must cease to be annoyed.*

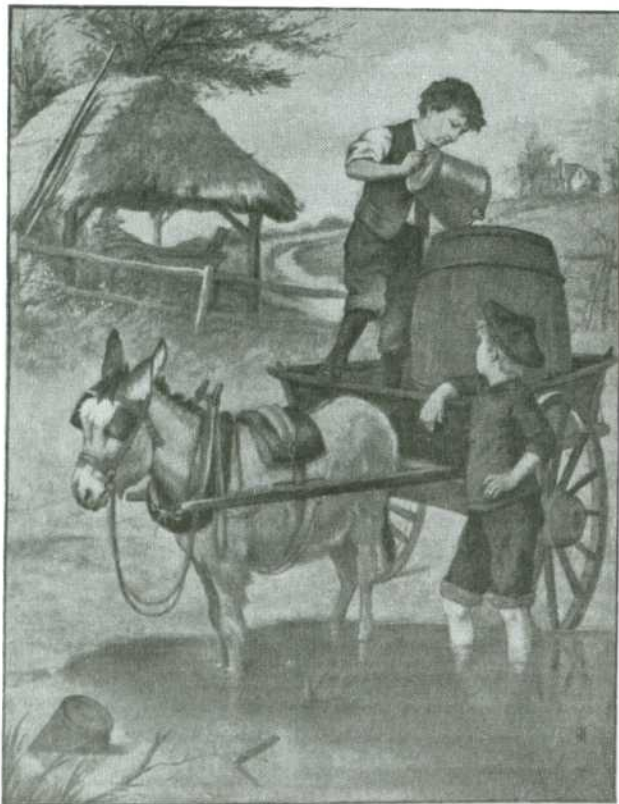
*We must be thoughtful of our brother's welfare, even though  
Rebukes are necessary in assisting him to grow.  
Then courage must be added, till with spirit firm, but kind,  
We tell him that the sins of youth must all be left behind.  
And patience must be practiced in the daily scenes of life,  
To aid us in eliminating bickerings and strife;  
For we must be at peace with man, and with our God, as well,  
If we would gain His favor now, and in the Kingdom dwell.*

*We should do unto others as we'd like to have them do,  
Forgiving and forbearing, and to every trust be true.  
We must avoid temptation, as we would a viper's sting,  
And by each pitfall build a wall (a necessary thing).  
By word, and by example we must hold aloft the Light,  
That those around may see in us His image shining bright,  
And some, perchance, be caused, in time, to turn and glorify  
The God and Father we adore, who dwelleth there on high.*

*If you would climb perfection's hill there is no time to waste,  
Behold, the sun is setting, and there is great need for haste;  
So do not look behind you at the sad destruction there,  
But press to gain the summit, and the joys of Zion share.  
The City now is beckoning; in just a few more days  
The groanings of this warfare shall be changed to songs of praise,  
For those enduring to the end—their longing eyes shall see  
Their cherished hopes fulfilled, the dawning of Eternity.*

—Liot L. Snyder





*An Old Fashioned Story—*

## **THE BEST KIND OF LOVE**

“**W**HAT a perfectly splendid day we will have!” cried Davy Jones, waving his spoon in sheer excitement.

The three brothers, Davy, John, and Pryce, were eating their breakfast of thin broth and bread in the old kitchen of Pen-y-Bryn Farm. In the summer some of the rooms were rented to visitors.

It was about the middle of a very hot summer now. The hay harvest was nearly over, and the fields left bare were dry and brown. How to get sufficient water for the cattle was becoming serious.

The son of one of the Pen-y-Bryn lodgers—a boy about the same age as Davy—was in the kitchen talking to them while they breakfasted. Something very unusual was about to happen. The lads were looking forward to a day in the park with one of the neighbors whose son and heir had come of age. The event was to be celebrated by a huge entertainment, and all his tenants and their families were invited.

Farmer Jones’s three sons were also invited, and the son of the people then staying at Pen-y-Bryn was, by special invitation, also to be of the party.

All were very much excited, and talked and laughed noisily as boys are sure to do under such circumstances.

The conversation was interrupted by the entrance of Mrs. Jones, a pale, delicate-looking woman, who sank into a chair for a moment, sighing wearily.

“You lads will have to wash and dress yourselves without my help this morning,” she said. “Your father is busy with his last field of hay; there is the food to be cooked for the men as well as the visitors’ meals to be seen to. I have some washing I must do too, and there is the water for the cattle that must be drawn from the river. How I am ever to get through all the work I am sure I do not know.”



Again she sighed, exhausted in the great heat.

"Never mind us, mother, we will take care of ourselves. Don't worry about that," cried Davy, cheerfully. "Come along, boys," he called.

Davy and John were the first to make their reappearance.

"Are we all right, Mother?" they asked together.

Mother was back in the kitchen by this time, busy with her washing. "Very good, boys," she answered, looking them over from top to toe. "Just mind your manners, and be good lads."

They promised, each giving her a sounding kiss. They were always very loving to Mother.

"Wish us a good day, Mother dear!"

"I do, my boys, with all my heart. But where are Master Walter and Pryce?"

"Not ready yet, I suppose. Tell them we have gone, we want to be off. And mind you, Mother, don't work too hard."

"Don't work too hard," she muttered to herself, with another long sigh. "How is that to be helped, I wonder?"

Just then the visitor they all so politely called Master Walter rushed in.

"Where are the others, Mrs. Jones?"

"Davy and John have gone on, leaving word you were to follow," was the reply. "Pryce must not be ready yet."

"Silly owl! I must run and hurry him up," and out rushed Walter as excitedly as he had entered.

A short time after, to Mrs. Jones's great surprise, Walter and Pryce appeared, both dressed in working clothes.

"Oh, Pryce, what *are* you thinking of? Your brothers started a long time ago, and you are not even dressed yet."

"I am thinking that I do not mean to go at all," answered Pryce, good-humoredly, "and Master Walter has decided to stay and keep me company."

"But why, *why*?" she cried, quite bewildered.

"You will find out by and by, Mother. It is nothing wrong that keeps us at home," said Pryce, with a mysterious, yet roguish expression on his rosy face. And beckoning to Walter, he went off into the yard.

Carrying the water for farm use was really a toilsome business. It had to be brought from a river that flowed along the foot of the hill on which the farm stood. A donkey cart containing a barrel and some tin pails conveyed the water up the steep stony road from the river to Pen-y-Bryn, but before this could be accomplished, the donkey had to be led down to the river, the barrel filled, and the donkey has to be led up again—some-

times with more than a little coaxing.

Still vexed at Pryce's strange behavior, Mrs. Jones was bending over her tub when she heard the rumble of wheels outside. Looking up she caught sight of the donkey cart, followed by her stay-at-home boys, turning through the yard gate.

"I can't believe my eyes!" she exclaimed. "Dear, dear little Pryce! He has given up his pleasure to carry the water for me."

Tears of joy gushed from her eyes at knowing what a kind, unselfish son she had, and she returned to her work with a lightened heart.

Down by the river the two companions were perfectly happy. Pryce had led the donkey into the shallow water at the edge and was standing in the cart emptying into the barrel the pails of water which Walter handed up to him from his station knee deep in the cool river.

"I have had the best of it, Pryce," he remarked, "I feel as cool as a cucumber. It is just lovely standing in this water."

"It is right you should, Master Walter, since you were so good as to stay at home and help me."

The last pail for the barrel had now been handed up, and Walter was resting his arm on the shaft of the cart. "You think a great deal of your mother, don't you?"

"We all do," was the reply. "We all love her dearly."

"But your kind of love is the best," said Walter sturdily. "You try to help her."

## A "Self-Control Room"

A certain electrical factory in Japan is said to have set up a "self-control room." When a Japanese worker becomes angry with his superior, he is allowed to go to the self-control room where he can relieve his rage by banging a life-size dummy of his boss with a bamboo rod.

Instead of banging dummies of the people who disturb you, why not create life-size images of your own impatience, lack of consideration, intolerance, stubbornness and pride and then batter them to pieces. In other words, build a self-control room where you can see the hideous images as they are, and destroy them.

If you keep at it, you'll find that you need to visit it less and less.

*Prayer: Lord, let me cast the beam out of my own eye before I complain about the mote in my brother's eye.*

## Watch, Watch

**"Watch ye, stand fast in the faith, quit you like men, be strong. Let all your things be done with charity"**  
**—I Corinthians 16:13-14.**

**"A** little sermon in a nutshell" is what someone called these two short verses, and we definitely agree. Within the Epistles of the apostle Paul, it is difficult to find more exhortation condensed in so few words.

The great Apostle was an illustrious champion in proclaiming the Gospel to the nations. Next to bringing his own life into subjection to the law of Christ (I Cor. 9:27) he worked unceasingly to enlighten the minds of the darkened world. As a speaker he was influential, and everywhere he went he persuaded some to believe his message. But upon departing to other cities he did not forget the believers he left behind. Often he sent some of his fellow workers to visit and encourage them, and to bring him word of their welfare. The letters which he sent to the young churches were a stimulant to them, as indeed they are to present-day believers in the Gospel.

The external environment of our lives is not vastly different from that of the early Christians. They, too, were surrounded by a world that knew not—and cared not—for God. Business, pleasures, the cares of life, immorality, corruption in politics, were some of the things they had to contend with as do we today. They had also physical persecution which we do not experience, yet no mention is made of it as something they dreaded. Their inward problems are identical to ours. Human nature has not changed. James wrote of Elias (James 5:17) that he was a man subject to like passions as they were, and it is safe to affirm that we are the same.

The necessity of watchfulness cannot be overstressed. So numerous are the allurements of the world that constant vigil is needful. Jesus warned His followers against the cares of this life, the temptations, the desire for

worldly praise, which are some of the evils that lead men downward. Often when Jesus commanded His followers to watch, He told them prayer should accompany watching. The reason is obvious, for with heartfelt and sincere prayer a true knowledge of self is more certain to be the result. Then, knowing our weaknesses, we can be watchful on those points above all else. For, after all, victory over sin, as any battle, depends to a great extent on the knowledge of the enemy's strength.

Firmness in the faith is another admonition. The work of being true to one's convictions is one that is accomplished only through years of diligent practice. In Paul's letter to Titus (2:7-8) we get a glimpse of what this means. "In all things showing thyself a pattern of good works: in doctrine showing uncorruptness, gravity, sincerity, sound speech, that cannot be condemned; that he that is of the contrary part may be ashamed, having no evil thing to say of you." To always show a good example, to be grave, sincere, using only "sound speech" so that no one can justly accuse us of wrongdoing, is a lofty and radiant plane of achievement.

We may all have noticed in everyday life that the most damaging friend a cause can have is a weak or ill-informed advocate. (This cause may well be the one which we profess to uphold, the cause of Christ.) Such a friend merely weakens the cause he advocates if, while presenting its noble qualities he fails to demonstrate by a good life the benefits of it. Strictly speaking, if we do not live up to what we preach, we are weakening that which we try to uphold. It is then that our enemies can find fault—and justly—for while they may be unable to attack the cause itself, yet because of our failure to practice what we teach, the cause is discredited.

This brings us to the next admonition in our text:

"quit you like men." The word "quit" in this connection is the archaic form and carries a different meaning than is attributed to it in modern usage. It means to conduct; to acquit; used reflexively. The newer translations of the Bible render this phrase: "Be men"; "play the man"; "do manfully"; "act like men"; "acquit yourselves like men." Jesus expressed the same thought: "Let your loins be girded about, and your lights burning; and ye yourselves like unto men that wait for their lord, when he will return from the wedding; that when he cometh and knocketh, they may open unto him immediately" (Luke 12:35-36).

A man, by Christian standards, is one who has trained his body and his passions to be the servants of his will; who loves truth and hates the wrong; who loves to do good, and respects others as himself. It is to live up to the best we know; to carry on in the path of duty though there be never a word of praise from a living soul; to motivate our lives by the principle: "Who-soever shall be chief among you, let him be your servant." Perhaps the greatest revelation of our manhood is the kind of performance we put on when we are criticized—justly or unjustly.

The possession of a strong, godly character is a noble virtue. It shows that such an individual is rooted and grounded in the faith. He is not driven about by every wind of doctrine. He is not attempting to serve two masters. His eye is single; his purpose is firm and determined, his thoughts fixed on God and His reward. Furthermore, he is ready to endure hardness as a good soldier of Jesus Christ; to wrestle with temptation, and wait patiently for the coming of the Lord. Can we expect to merit the favor of God unless we are strong and courageous like the faithful of old?

The word "charity," or "love," in Bible usage is far-reaching. It goes beyond the modern meaning of almsgiving. As John declared (I John 5:3) it is the keeping of the commandments, without which, though one should give all his goods to feed the poor, and his body to be burned, it would profit him nothing (I Cor. 13:3). In our text it includes all previous admonitions and summarizes the whole with a grand climax.

While primarily a man's duty is to look to himself, to see that the "beam" is not in his own eye, to keep *himself* unspotted from the world, his life as a Christian would not be complete or perfect without performing his duty to his fellowman. Every good act we do for the cause of the Gospel, because God commands it, is charity. An exhortation of our fellow workers to virtuous deeds is superior to almsgiving. To direct a wanderer from the precepts of God to the right road; to lead the spiritually blind; to remove the stumblingstones, thorns,

and other obstructions from a brother's road; to give the water of life to the thirsty—these and numerous other like deeds compose that vital element of a Christian's life—charity—which has been essential in every dispensation.

MM

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## Obituary

### Bessie Mathias

On December 15, 1985, death claimed a longtime friend and Sister in Selma, Iowa, Bessie Mathias. She and her husband became acquainted with the Megiddo Church more than 50 years ago, and did their best to instill right principles in the minds of their children. Two of them, Brother Clifford Mathias and Sister Marie Sutton, are active members of our Rochester Congregation.

Sister Mathias, with her husband, maintained a regular correspondence with the church and received all church publications. She will be remembered by her family and friends for her exceptionally kind and unselfish spirit.

She is survived by the two children who are members of our congregation, also another daughter, Barbara Crum of Bondurant, Iowa; two sons, Junior of Birmingham, and Roy of Russell, Iowa; twelve grandchildren; thirteen great-grandchildren, and a sister, Pink Pearson of Selma, Iowa.

Funeral services were conducted in Eldon, Iowa, on December 18, Mr. Russell Trachsel, a longtime friend of the family, officiating.

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## Abib Is Coming!

THIS year the members and friends of the Megiddo Church will welcome the beginning of another sacred year on the evening of April 9, Bible time being measured from "evening to evening" (Lev. 23:32). The ancient Hebrew pattern, according to the law God gave to Moses, was to begin the New Year with the month "Abib," which is the month beginning with the first new moon following the spring equinox. This new moon occurs this year on April 9.

The day has double significance as we commemorate the beginning of another sacred year and also as we set aside the time to remember and honor our great coming King.

## • Does God "Bruise" Us?

*"I have a question about a passage in Isaiah 53. I understand that the chapter is speaking of the sufferings of Christ and also of those who will compose His faithful bride, but why should it 'please the Lord to bruise him'? I have checked several of the newer translations, and all seem to have the same thought. I would appreciate your comments."*

The text in question reads: "Yet it pleased the Lord to bruise him; he hath put him to grief: when thou shalt make his soul an offering for sin, he shall see his seed, he shall prolong his days, and the pleasure of the Lord shall prosper in his hand" (Isa. 53:10).

You are correct in thinking that it is inconsistent with the divine plan for the Lord to be "pleased . . . to bruise" His servants, as though He were intentionally arranging for them to suffer. And the translation is changed hardly at all in the the newer translations.

However, the Septuagint Bible, the earliest translation made from the Hebrew into Greek several centuries before Christ has another thought. The Septuagint rendering of this text is as follows: "The Lord also is pleased to purge him from his stroke. If ye can give an offering for sin, your soul shall see a long-lived seed: the Lord also is pleased to take away from the travail of his soul, so show him light, and to form him with understanding."

The thought of "purge," i.e., cleanse, purify, render clean, is entirely different from the thought of "bruise," yet this is an alternate translation allowed by the original Hebrew. The original word translated "bruise" in our King James Version is *katharidzo* and is defined in Thayer's Greek-English Lexicon as "to make clean, to cleanse; . . . in a moral sense, to free from the defilement of sin and from faults; to purify from wickedness; to abstain in future from wrong-doing; to free from the guilt of sin, to purify; to consecrate by cleansing or purifying; to consecrate, dedicate."

The Interpreter's Bible has observed this translation and offers this comment: "For 'bruise him' the Septuagint reads 'cleanse (or 'purge') him,' an

acceptable meaning in the Aramaic."

This translation is in harmony with general Bible teaching. God does use the events that come into our lives—our "stroke," literally "heavy affliction, severe wound, a blow, strip," afflictions, suffering, that which would seem to wound us—to purify and cleanse us from sin, to "purify from wickedness." The apostle Paul expressed this same thought in his Epistle to the Ephesians, speaking of Christ's work in behalf of His bride or church: "That he might present it to himself a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish" (Eph. 5:27).

God's whole purpose in working with His human creation is to perfect and purify, to develop a people that He can use in His eternal purpose, and it is only through "much tribulation" that we can qualify for that honorary role (Acts 14:22).

## • Why Did God Refuse Cain's Offering?

There are several passages of Scripture which tell us why the Lord refused Cain's offering and accepted Abel's offering. The first is found in Gen. 4:6-7, "And the Lord said unto Cain. . . . If thou doest well shalt thou not be accepted? and if thou doest not well, sin lieth at the door." The Lord could see beyond the offering to the jealousy in Cain's heart, which Cain soon manifest in slaying his brother. The Lord would not and could not accept Cain's offering when Cain's heart was filled with jealousy.

The prophet Samuel, at the time David was anointed king, learned how the Lord judges. He said, "For the Lord seeth not as man seeth; for man looketh on the outward appearance, but the Lord looketh on the heart." Righteousness is the only standard God recognizes. He is not concerned about the nature of the sacrifice, whether it be an animal or the fruit of the ground. Either is acceptable if it be the best we have and if it comes from a good and honest heart.

The Epistle of I John, chapter 3, verses 11-12 state the reason clearly: "For this is the message that ye heard from the beginning, that we should love one



another. Not as Cain who was of that wicked one, and slew his brother. And wherefore slew he him? Because his own works were evil and his brother's righteous." God judged Cain by his "works."

The thought has been advanced that God accepted Abel's offering because it was an animal sacrifice, but there is no Biblical basis for this conclusion. The prophet Isaiah condemned the insincere worshippers in his day for their animal sacrifices, and the reason again was the condition of their heart. He says: "To what purpose is the multitude of your sacrifices unto me? saith the Lord: I am full of the burnt offerings of rams, and the fat of fed beasts; and I delight not in the blood of bullocks, or of lambs, or of he goats. . . . Wash you, make you clean; put away the evil of your doings from before mine eyes; cease to do evil; Learn to do well" (Isa. 1:11, 16-17). This is the primary command: Ceasing to do evil and learning to do well.

Psalms 51:16 and 17 leaves no doubt as to the sacrifice required of all true Christians. "For thou desirest not sacrifice; else would I give it: thou delightest not in burnt offering. The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit: a broken and a contrite heart, O God, thou wilt not despise."

Had Cain brought his offering of the fruit of the ground with a humble and contrite heart, God would have accepted it.

#### • Concerning Hebrews 11:35

*"Is it wrong to accept deliverance when there is a lawful way provided? I mean, in a case of persecution. Hebrews 11:35 sounds like those who were tortured were more righteous because they refused deliverance. What do you think?"*

The text in question is describing the valor, courage and faith of those who suffered persecutions during the heat of the day of salvation, "who through faith subdued kingdoms, wrought righteousness, obtained promises, stopped the mouths of lions, quenched the violence of fire, escaped the edge of the sword, out of weakness were made strong, waxed valiant in fight, . . . women received their dead raised to life again: and others were tortured, not accepting deliverance; that they might obtain a better resurrection: and others had trial of cruel mockings and scourgings, yea, moreover of bonds and imprisonment" (Heb. 11:33-36).

The passage appears to mention both sides of the question: those who "escaped the edge of the sword" and those who "were tortured, not accepting deliverance."

We must remember that Christian believers are not

ascetics; they are obedient servants of Christ. They must be loyal to the principles of Christ; they must not in any way deny their faith; but unlike other religious groups, they do not seek suffering as a witness to their faith. True religion is practical; God does not ask us to endure that which we can escape, nor does He reward any self-inflicted persecution.

Why, then, does Heb. 11:35 say that these people were tortured, "not accepting deliverance"? The word translated "accept" has a second primary definition, which is "to expect, look for, wait for." It is used in Luke 12:36 of those servants who were "expecting their Lord." We can easily understand how those persecuted Christians could not "wait for" or "expect" deliverance—it was not always the will of God. Nor could they deny their faith because of the opposition. Persecution was a serious test of their faith and loyalty.

MM

## Nothing Free?

**N**OTHING free? Do you pay for the soft breeze blown to you on a suffocatingly hot day? For the magic of starlit heavens whose beauty is yours for lifting your eyes? The glory of a rising sun bringing you a new day filled with opportunity to live, love, and serve?

What of the bright little flowers that push their color through the mossy sod that man may be cheered by their beauty and fragrance? Or the feathery greenness of the trees about you in the summer? The marvel of a rainbow arched across the sky? The gorgeous colors of a sunset?

Is there any charge for the gold and red and bronze of autumn leaves? The scintillating loveliness that unrolls before your eyes when you behold the miracle of a soft whirling snowstorm or the beauty created by the icicles hanging from the trees?

But there is something far greater than all these free gifts, something likewise "without money and without price," and so wonderful that it makes other beauties and blessings seem insignificant by comparison. This is the greatest gift of all—the gift of God's wondrous truth, the faith which was once delivered to the saints—and by enriching our lives with this one true faith we shall be made worthy to enjoy the blessings of Eternity.

## Grateful

I am sending to you my warmest greetings and wish you blessings of our God. I am sorry for such a long time not answering. I have actually a lot of work to do at home (besides I work professionally), and this causes my delay.

I have read the letters that I received and for which I thank you very much. I am studying them diligently because of their contents, and also because about 60 per cent of words I am compelled to search for in dictionary. So that reading of such a letter takes much more time for me. I do hope, however, that soon I will be reading them much more fluently and quickly. I liked very much your thoughts referring to the methods of searching of gold in combination with experience of our faith and comments of the words from Proverbs.

We, in our environment, meet a lot of persons who don't want to know the true God, to rely upon Him. Therefore, they don't know the real joy. Very true are the words from Proverbs.

Still there will pass certain period of time before the moment when I will be able to write to you freely, but I am sure that such time will certainly come. Meanwhile I am diligently studying sciences of the Church, together with my husband. I am impressed very much by directness and clearness of the Truth of our God. Only now I really understand the plan of our Saviour and of our God, which is based on creation and working out in ourselves a new human being on the example of Christ. I thank God that He gave me a possibility to understand.

In the evenings, we think about

what really links us, about our common hope and faith in learning and understanding God. At the evenings we read, listen to the cassettes and at that time you are extremely close to us. Your letters are encouraging us, giving us strength. I am asking you very much for the consecutive letters. I will wait for them.

*Poland*

E. K.

## Press On

I think the hymn "Press On" gives us all a lot to think of. "Press firmly on altho' within the way are but a few: The night bespeaks our Master soon will come and bring the prize. With endless life in view, we can press on and gain sweet rest in endless world to come."

Jesus said, "Because strait is the gate, and narrow is the way, which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it." That is why I love to be with the few; it increases my faith, and makes me feel at home. But that alone does not assure us we will enter the Kingdom. It only assures us we are on the right road. We have a work to do. It reminds me of a point from one of the sermons: We could "lose this war."

We have much to be thankful for. When I look back over my life, I can truly say, "God works in a mysterious way His wonders to perform." Like the Psalmist says in Ps. 126:3, "The Lord hath done great things for us; whereof we are glad." The Lord will surely do on His part if we do on ours. That we can be sure of.

*Newfoundland*

G. W.

## Memories

It was with profound sorrow I learned of Kenneth's (Brother Flowerday's) death, from the *Message*. What a grand person he was. Straight as an arrow and never far from the mark.

When a boy, long ago, he was my altar ego. I remember riding in his side car from Rochester to the Megiddo III at Vergennes in one day, some trip in those days. I wore goggles but my eyes were like two burnt holes in a blanket.

You will miss him but his example will always be there to strengthen you. I am sure God will be with you.

*Virginia*

F. T.

## No Excuse

I have been reading from some back issues of the *Message* of late. They contain many good lessons to keep our thoughts on good, helpful things.

We have no excuse for not learning the Truth after it has been written for our learning. We can find time to read and meditate if we want to. It helps to keep us in the right channels in this life for we all have our Jordans to cross each day.

*South Carolina*

H. C.

## FINAL NOTICE

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## Take Time to Think

This afternoon I'm sitting in the garden in the sun, oh how enjoyable. Is there anything quite like the sun, which makes us feel better, look better, and gets our crops to grow. It's hard for us here in England to believe what has happened in Ethiopia where the sun burns down day after day, and no rain has fallen for 10 years. Many people here have done work to help the dreadful famine that those people are suffering, but it seems to me however much money and food are sent to them not much good will come to their land without rain. Much as we have been complaining, we should be grateful we are not suffering from drought which is far, far worse.

I've just been reading from the *Message*, Think—Turn—Live, and

this afternoon I'm doing just that: Thinking, and I guess I've got a lot of turning to do, but as you say, Thinking is the first step. What a dreadful mess we all seem to have got ourselves into, where it's rush, rush, rush all day long and no time at all to think.

A little while ago I was told a story about a cow which was being used in the making of a film. After doing very well for a few weeks the animal was taken seriously ill. When seen by a vet, the verdict was the animal had not been allowed long enough to chew the cud. After this a certain time each day was set aside for the cow to do just that, and it soon recovered. I feel perhaps people are much the same as that humble animal and need time for thinking, or if you like the word better, to sit in quiet meditation. But what a shame it is some people

would soon take advantage of it and do no work at all.

I wonder what the Lord thinks of all the cars on our roads today rushing to and fro at such speed. I'm hoping this will come to an end with Jesus' return. Friday evening must be the worst, with every one trying to see who can get home fastest to eat, drink and make merry. I'm so happy we have no part in it.

England

J. T.

*"Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above."*

*Ah yes, my friend, we need to get down on our knees and render thanks for the free gifts which overflow from the hand of a bounteous Giver.*

## All in a Point of View

SAGE voices have told us repeatedly to be careful in our judgments of others. It is so easy to excuse ourselves; so difficult to forgive others.

When the other fellow takes a long time to do an assignment we say, he's "slow." But we, taking the same length of time, are being "thorough."

Let the other fellow make a suggestion on how something should be done, and he is "overstepping his bounds." If we make the suggestion, we're showing some good old-fashioned initiative!

If someone states his position strongly, he's "bull-headed." When we state our side of the question strongly, we're "being firm."

Let the other fellow overlook a few rules of etiquette and he's "rude." If we skip a few rules, we're being "original."

Let a person do something that pleases a number of people and he's trying to "look impressive." If we do it, it's "cooperation."

When the other fellow won't give in to an obvious point, we say he's stuck in the mud. When we don't want to give in, we're being steadfast.

Someone objects to the way a plan is being carried out, and we call them hypercritical. Let the objection come from us and we're "intuitive."

Some are always too young to do it, others are too old; we—by some miracle—are just right!

If someone can't get along with his brother, why, that's needless. When we run into a problem with someone, everyone knows that they're impossible.

When we know the answer to a question, the answer is so obvious; when we don't know, it's hard.

So long as the problem is someone else's, it's not that bad; when it becomes our own, it's dreadful.

What about trying to see things from the other fellow's point of view? What about that lesson Jesus taught, that we should "love one another" and "forgive" as we would be forgiven?

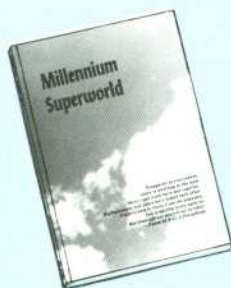
Before we pass judgment on another, maybe we should spend some time thinking about the problem from *his* point of view—we might be surprised what it looks like!



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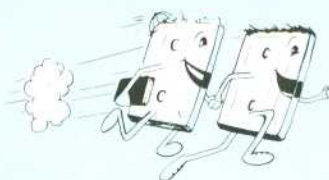
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