

Megiddo Message



*I thank Thee, Lord, that all my joy
Is touched with pain;
That shadows fall on brightest hours;
That thorns remain;
So that earth's bliss may be my guide,
And not my chain.*

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GOD Is Preparing... for Us?

Most everyone has had the pleasure of preparing for company, whether family or distinguished friends. Preparation is often a delightful task, because as we prepare we are living in advance some of the joy we are anticipating.

The great God of heaven also knows the delights of preparing. He is setting aside special pleasures that will delight His children. Far more than a pleasurable pastime, it is the whole purpose of His creation. Eagerly He plans as He brings one world after another to a glorious consummation.

Right now He is making preparations for the new members of His earthly family. Have we realized that that number can include us? Yes, right now He is getting ready the gracious benefits which He has promised to share with His faithful children. God is preparing.

This fact is repeated a number of times in Scripture. When the mother of James and John asked Jesus to give special places of recognition to her sons in His Kingdom, Jesus replied: "To sit on my right hand, and on my left, is not mine to give, but it shall be given to them for whom it is prepared of my Father" (Matt. 20:23). The preparations are being made, He said, with someone in mind; but that choice is made only by My Father.

In the Parable of the Sheep and the Goats, where Jesus pictures the separating of the faithful and unfaithful, the words of blessing to those on His right hand are: "Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you"—the Kingdom has been *prepared*, made ready in advance (Matt. 25:34).

When Simeon, that devout man who had been waiting patiently "for the consolation of Israel," first saw the Christchild and spoke by the power of the Holy Spirit, he too mentioned God's preparations for the salvation of the faithful. These are his words: "For mine eyes have seen thy salvation, Which thou hast prepared before the face of all people; A light to lighten the Gentiles, and the glory of thy people Israel" (Luke 2:25, 30-32).

The apostle Paul surpassed the limits of human eloquence in an effort to describe the exceeding grandeur of God's preparations for each faithful achiever. "Eye hath not seen," he exclaimed, "nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him" (I Cor. 2:9). Another time he called it a "far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory" (II Cor. 4:17). Our finite minds cannot begin to conceive of the preparations our great God is making for His new sons and daughters.

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"Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him"

—I Cor. 2:9

Megiddo means ...

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

We believe ...

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

Soon-coming events ...

THE HERALD AND THE KING

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

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

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

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Keep Thyself Pure

*When so much around us and within us is impure,
is it really possible for us to be pure?
The answer is "Yes!"*

As Paul writes to his son-in-the-faith Timothy about the duties and obligations of the Christian minister, he suddenly interjects this very direct, personal and fatherly word: "Keep thyself pure" (I Tim. 5:22). He does not tell Timothy that he must live in a pure world, or a pure city. He does not even hold him responsible for keeping the members of his church pure, or his family, but only *himself*: "Keep thyself pure."

It was as if he had said, "Timothy, there are contaminants all around you; it is your job to keep them out of your mind and heart. It won't be easy, but you must do it. And it is something that only *you* can do. Keep yourself pure."

The command is to Timothy and to all who like him aspire to membership in God's family of pure and holy ones. If we hope someday to be of that family, we must be taking on the family likeness now by becoming morally like them.

Every child of God must be pure.

What is purity by God's standards? Purity describes the mind and heart that is not defiled or polluted by anything low, vulgar or filthy. None of the "lusts of the flesh," "lust of the eyes," or "pride of life" are harbored in the heart that is pure (I John 2:16).

Purity is the core of the law of Christ. The very thought of it is lifting, for purity is the condition of the heart which opens to us the sublimest promise in the Divine record: "Blessed are the pure in heart: for they shall see God" (Matt. 5:8).

Purity describes the mind of Christ, He who was "holy, harmless, undefiled" (Heb. 7:26). Oh, to be pure as Christ was pure, spotless and clean through and through! This is the cherished love and longing of every life-seeker. To dwell on a plane above the earth level, above our environment, above ourselves; to be "in" the world but in no way contaminated by it—oh, how sublime!

Purity is, according to the apostle Paul, the ability to think as Christ

thought. "Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus" (Phil. 2:5), more specifically defined as "whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure...think on these things" (Phil. 4:8). Peter gave the identical advice when he wrote: "Forasmuch then as Christ hath suffered for us in the flesh, arm yourselves likewise with the same mind" (I Pet. 4:1)—the same attitudes, the same concerns, the same level of thought, the same spotless purity, unsoiled by anything sordid or selfish.

Pure religion is a cloak, a protection, a defense, a covering, keeping the believer "undefiled before God" and "unspotted from the world" (Jas. 1:27).

Purity describes the life that is lived in "heavenly places in Christ Jesus" (Eph. 2:6), even though its physical surroundings are polluted. It is a way of life, the life Christ lived. That is why the apostle John wrote that "every man that hath this hope in him," the hope of being made physically like Christ, purifies "himself, even as he [Christ] is pure" (I John 3:3).

God is a God of purity, uprightness, holiness. In fact, purity and righteousness are inseparable. The very first property of "the wisdom from above" is that it is "pure" (James 3:17). The believer is said to be "washed with pure water" (Heb. 10:22), the water of life, which is "pure...clear as crystal" (Rev. 22:1), living water that will spring up into everlasting life (John 4:14).

But what about *us* and purity? When so much around us and within us is *impure*, is it really possible for us to become pure? Can we keep pure and spotless in the midst of what Paul called a "crooked and perverse" world?

The answer must be "yes" because God would not ask what

we could not do, and God has commanded us to be pure. So let us see what stands in our way.

The Struggle for Purity

The first problem is right in ourselves, for all of us are by nature "children of wrath, even as others" (Eph. 2:3). We are born on the animal level, with animal instincts for survival. We are not born pure. We have in us a disposition strongly inclined to evil. "The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked" (Jer. 17:9)—hardly a description of purity. Paul wrote that "the first man"—to which we all belong—is "of the earth, earthy" (I Cor. 15:47). Jesus affirmed this when He pinpointed the source of evil as the human heart: "For from within, out of the heart of men, proceed evil thoughts..." and all the host of other evils that tempt us (Mark 7:21-23). Whether the temptation be fornication or foolishness, promiscuity or pride, selfishness or slander or fleshly lust, we need never wonder where the temptation came from—it is right within us.

At the same time God has equipped us with the qualities we need to rise above the animal level. He has given us willpower, and the ability to reason and learn from our experience and the experiences of others. We are not caught in a dilemma from which there is no escape.

Our second problem in the struggle for purity is the situation in which we find ourselves today, a world on the moral level of ancient Sodom, whose sights and sounds are farthest from pure, where everything humanly corruptible has been corrupted. Everywhere we turn, it seems, there is no place clean. The entertainment world, the political world, the educational system, the media, the social world,

the marketplace—all show the effects of contamination.

We are surrounded; yet through it all rings the challenge of the great Apostle: "Keep thyself pure." Yes, walk, as it were, through the dust and soot all around you and keep your white robes of character fastidiously clean! "Let thy garments be always white" (Eccl. 9:8). Always!

How?

Since purity is a condition of the mind or heart, what we allow ourselves to think about is extremely important. Too easily we underestimate the power of our minds.

We cannot be too careful what we allow to impress our minds. What we think, we are.

The human brain, we are told, is a most remarkable computer, of almost infinite capacity—with one notable difference. The computer's memory can be instantly erased; the human mind retains everything that impresses it, to a greater or lesser degree. Those who have studied the brain tell us that our mind keeps a permanent file of whatever it assimilates.

Doesn't this fact add meaning to Paul's words to Timothy, "Keep thyself pure"? In other words, take definite steps to keep contaminating thoughts out of your mind. What superexcellent advice! Far easier is it to keep *pure* than to cleanse or remove impressions that have been made.

Keep Thyself Pure

It also reinforces the point penned by Solomon, the man who knew but did not do: "Keep thy heart with all diligence" (Prov. 4:23), or as it is worded in other translations, "With all watchfulness guard thine heart" (Sprl); "Use all thy watchfulness to keep thy heart true" (Knox); "Guard your heart more than any treasure" (NEB).

We cannot be too careful what we allow to impress our minds.

That means, then, that as a dedicated follower of Christ I must

If we would become pure as Christ is pure, we must be continually – consciously – lifting our minds to higher levels.

guard my mind continually, for I do not want my mind to be an open manhole collecting anything that falls into it. A closed mind may seem like a narrow thing, but a wide open mind is dangerous!

Safest are we when we can close our mind at the command of our will. This was what the apostle Peter had in mind when he wrote: "Wherefore gird up the loins of your mind, be sober, and hope to the end for the grace that is to be brought unto you at the revelation of Jesus Christ" (I Pet. 1:13). Well-girded minds are well guarded, ready to keep back any unwanted intruder. Or as the passage is rendered in another version, "Prepare your minds for action." The picture is of one preparing for battle. As believers we are to grab hold of our

mind and take charge of our thought-life with a firm hand, bringing it under strict obedience to Christ (II Cor. 10:4-5).

What practical, everyday steps can we take to *keep* our hearts? How do we control the impressions that enter our minds?

Guard the Gates

In ancient times, strong cities were protected by strong walls. But the walls could not be solid, because people had to come and go. So they built gates, which became the most vulnerable part of the wall. Gates had to be carefully guarded around the clock if the inhabitants of the city were to be safe. The wall was no stronger than its gate.

Our minds also have gates. Two of the most vulnerable are the eye gate and the ear gate. The eye gate includes what we read or see; the ear gate, what we hear. By carefully guarding these two gates we shall find that we have a new measure of control over our minds.

The eye gate. To guard the eye gate we must make a conscious effort to limit what we see. "The eyes of a fool"—not of the serious Christian—"are in the ends of the earth" (Prov. 17:24).

Settle it in your mind that you do not have to see or look at everything that is around you; nor do you have to read everything within reach. *Plan* what you will look at; *ponder* what you will read. Ask yourself: Is this the best food for my mind? Are these impressions I will want to keep to build up my faith and fortify my inner life and character before God?

Said Jesus, "The light of the body is the eye" (Matt. 6:22). In other words, the eye is a gate to the mind. To the extent that we can limit what we see we can control what enters our mind; for everything that reaches our mind will influence our thought-life, whether we want it to

or not. And every impure image we carelessly let in, programs our mind for more impurity.

The ear gate. The same is true of the ear gate. Whenever possible we should avoid hearing that which is deadening to our spiritual effort. If a conversation is not edifying and we can do nothing to influence or guide it, it may be possible to remove ourselves from it; if not, we can at least make a conscious effort to "close the gate" by thinking other—higher—thoughts.

But...

But we must live and work and travel and shop in this modern Sodom, and it is inevitable that in spite of all our good effort there will be times when our eyes or ears capture what we wish they had not. What do we do then? What do we do with the images and the thoughts that linger?

There is an answer. The process is much the same as we would apply in cleansing poison from an open wound. Just because there is no way to physically remove every dram of poison or every infectious germ we do not disregard it saying that nothing can be done. On the contrary, we do the very best that we can. We flood it with water, or some other pure substance, to dilute the effects of the poison.

Just so with our minds. We cannot pluck out the evil, much as we would like to. But we can consciously apply our minds to that which is good, wholesome and constructive, and in this way "dilute" the poison. We can, with liberal applications of the water of life, cleanse the polluted area so that the effects of the contamination will be scarcely noticed.

This was the method recommended—and used—by the apostle Paul: "Forgetting what lies 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). Two actions must be taken simultaneously: "Forgetting...and reaching forth." We must forget the past and at the same time *reach forward*. As long as we allow our minds to dwell on what tempts, bothers or tries us, the impression only grows stronger. We must forcefully, consciously apply our minds to thinking *other* thoughts, flooding our minds with all that is true, pure, good, wholesome, holy and upright (Phil. 4:8), and the unwanted impressions will become less and less, until we scarcely notice them at all.

There may be no simple way to erase a memory, but it can be crowded out. Do we question the effectiveness of this principle? Just try to recite the twenty-third Psalm and count to twenty at the same time. It is the simple formula of our former pastor, Rev. Maud Hembree: to "replace every evil thought with a good thought." In this way the good can literally push out the unwanted.

We should not be discouraged at the persistence of wrong thoughts. Our minds are naturally open to all kinds of vagrants. Even the most disciplined are not above the temptation to think low. If we would become pure as Christ is pure, we must be continually lifting our minds to higher levels. Unwanted impressions will come—at times we will wonder where they came

from!—but they need not remain. They may be of an illicit nature. Or they may be of trivia, useless incidents, petty events. Or they may be thoughts of foolishness, which the Bible calls sin. Going deeper, they may be harborings of bitterness, slander, malice, or jealousy, or memories of an injury or wound which, if we are not careful, will become festered and inflamed simply by thinking upon them.

Sometimes the unwelcome thoughts may be of ourselves, of pride, selfishness, or personal ambition. They may be self-promoting thoughts, for self and not for God. Whatever their nature, they will settle down and stay unless we *crowd* them out. They will never leave of their own accord!

"OCCUPIED"

Our best defense, then, is to have our minds *preoccupied* with consciously *chosen, selected* thoughts and impressions. When we do this, *we* are in command of our minds, and unwanted images will scarcely even register on our mental screen.

How important that we practice this, because we become what we think about. "As he thinketh in his heart, so is he" (Prov. 23:7).

A warning, for sure; but this fact may have positive as well as negative effects. If we allow our minds to wander randomly, our character is sure to degenerate. But as we feed upon the Word of God, as we ponder its insights, as we fix our

Post the Word of God at the forefront of your mind as a sentinel to keep out what is impure.

minds on that which is holy and true and pure, as we revel in thoughts of God and the angels and the holy men and women of old, their lives, their tests, their struggles and victories and all that has been written of them for our learning, *we gradually become like* them. To the degree that we fix our minds on right things, we pull ourselves upward, above ourselves, above the low feelings and desires that are our natural heritage, and become more and more Christlike.

Recall the old maxim, "Sow a thought, reap an action. Sow an action, reap a habit. Sow a habit, reap a character. Sow a character, reap a destiny."

What does all this mean in the struggle for purity of heart? The thoughts of our mind are the real measure of our purity. If we allow in our mind any little delight at the sight or sound of evil; if we permit any small mental compromises of

Sow a thought, reap an action. Sow an action, reap a habit. Sow a habit, reap a character. Sow a character, reap a destiny.

“They Walked in the

We who find ourselves surrounded on every hand by evil can draw a graphic lesson in purity from the experience of the three Hebrew children, of whom it is written, They walked in the fire (Dan. 3:25). The world of today could well be symbolized by a burning, fiery furnace, for it is all too eager to consume virtue and bring those striving to live on a higher plane down to low levels of conduct and conversation.

It is recorded of Daniel's three companions that they walked in the midst of the fire and were not consumed. They *walked* in it—they did not crawl or creep downhearted, or run frantically about without purpose; they walked manfully through it. They maintained genuine godly poise through a severe trial. How could they do this? They had a “fourth person” with them, one “like the Son of God”; they lived an open life before God; they walked with God's angel, and the angel was there

to strengthen them in their trial, to deliver and save them from harm.

We, too, have the promise of “ministering spirits,” heaven-sent helpers, angels of God, who will be near and strengthen us today if we are walking with God through our fiery trials.

We are living in a furnace of evil, perhaps by comparison seven times hotter than in times past. It has been stated that Elijah, the most celebrated of the Hebrew prophets, would return at a time of “surpassing wickedness” and impiety. We see this condition in the world today; iniquity flourishes on every side, while goodness and virtue are often frowned upon. The Lord is allowing it to prove us, whether or not we will walk nobly in the midst of the fire, keeping ourselves above reproach as Christians should, walking uprightly as the early Christians did. He is allowing it to prove whether we will walk in the fire, or be consumed by it. He is

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our principles; if we allow ourselves a little liberty here and there to dabble in that which is impure, unholy, or beneath the dignified glory of a Christian, we are pulling ourselves down to that lower level, and are inviting more thoughts from the same lower level. Let us repeat the wise advice of the errant Solomon: “Keep thy heart with all diligence.” Or, “Above all else, guard your heart, for it is the well-spring of life” (Prov. 4:23, NASB).

Avoid, Avoid...

We cannot overemphasize the need to do all we can to avoid contact with anything that we do not want to be part of us. The mind cannot—will not—remain empty. Nor can we tell ourselves simply to stop thinking about something undesirable. To illustrate: suppose someone says, “Don't think about slimy, writhing, poisonous snakes swimming in the sewers, slithering up your drain pipes, crawling around your sinks, hiding in your

slippers”—what are you thinking about? Snakes, of course. And the more you might tell yourself not to think about them, the more vivid becomes the picture.

But suppose someone says, “Think about the most beautiful sunset you ever saw, or the most delightful walk you ever took on a warm, moonlight night”—go ahead and picture it, and can't you just see it?

This is the power of our minds, and a mighty power it is.

Fire”

allowing it to prove whether we will forget His promises, or remember that “surely there is an end [“reward,” margin],” and our expectation shall not be disappointed (Prov. 23:18).

It is written of those faithful three, “The fire had no power” on them, nor did “the smell of fire” pass on them (Dan. 3:27). The same is true in a spiritual sense. They kept themselves entirely free from its contamination; no one could afterward have told that they had been in the fire. They did not let it affect them, but lived above it. The promises of God kept them steady, upright, and gave them the faith and courage to keep walking in the fire until God’s appointed time of release should come. They not only kept faith with God when the fire burned low, and when it was hot, but when it was “seven times” hotter than usual.

We can take a great lesson from this, and hold fast to what is right however contaminated our surroundings.

True Christians are not “good” only when it is comparatively easy to be good, or when the environment is naturally conducive to virtue. The test comes when the circumstances are adverse to goodness, when goodness is berated and ridiculed, or when those who once maintained higher standards have allowed the fire to consume them. Then it is that we prove whether we will exalt God’s ways or whether the fire will have power to consume us. It is then that we prove whether we will be contaminated, or whether we will come out without even the “smell of smoke” on us.

There are many small fires of temptation in daily life through which we must pass until we get to the point where we are so unaffected by them that they leave not even the smell of smoke upon us. Perhaps the secret lies in *walking* in the fire, not standing still or sitting down in it.

(Continued on page 10)

What is the best patrol we can use to guard the gates of our mind? Nearly two thousand years ago the Psalmist faced the same need and this is what he did: He posted the Word of God as a sentinel at the entrance of his mind, so that every entrant had to pass scrutiny. “Thy word have I hid in mine heart, that I might not sin against thee” (Ps. 119:11). Whatever vagrant might come visiting, the Word was already there, fully armed, on duty, and ready to give battle.

If the Psalmist needed his mind guarded 2000 years ago, what about us in this modern-day Babylon?

Jesus used this same defense with His ever ready “It is written.” The Word was constantly there, on duty. Do we wonder that He said, “Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God” (Matt. 4:4)?

The Psalmist had yet another means of defense: the armor of praise. “His praise shall continually be in my mouth” (Ps. 34:1).

Well he knew that his heart could not be praising God and at the same time be entertaining an evil thought. We can use the law of God today in the same way, as a grid, a filter composed of our strong convictions and God-centered thoughts. Such a filter will sort out and classify what comes along, and whatever does not meet the standard will not go through. In this way, we will be guarding our heart, keeping it pure.

It is the same process we use in bringing water into our homes. We cannot prevent rust and foreign particles in our pipes, but by installing a filter we can still have fresh, clean water. Just so the Word of God at the forefront of our minds can keep back what is impure, so that it does not enter and contaminate, so that every thought reaching our conscious minds has passed the surveillance of that Word.

The results of this "filtered thinking" will be many. Perhaps the greatest effect will be on what we talk about, for what we do not think we will not say. Idle talk, or gossip, or trivia will not get through. Instead, we will find ourselves talking about what we have been thinking on—the Word of God, the deep lessons and insights it has for us, the new age just ahead, our bright prospect of life in the world to come, and all the inspiring pictures that accompany these thoughts.

Let us take heart from the loving examples of faithfulness left us in the Word of God, and make a new effort to keep ourselves pure. Let us keep our minds under conscious supervision, allowing in them only that which is useful and constructive, upbuilding and spiritually stimulating, that we may finally become pure even as Christ is pure, and be presented spotless before the presence of His glory with exceeding joy! MM

Pure religion is a cloak, a protection, a defense, a covering, keeping the believer "undefiled before God" and "unspotted from the world" – Jas. 1:27.

God allows no fire we cannot walk in.

There are few days in life when we do not pass through some kind of fire, some heat that tries our patience, our faith or our steadfastness. Are we letting the fire perfect virtue or does it leave at least a taint of smoke on our garments? Sometimes the fire can be pretty hot when it comes to a simple test of being easily entreated. If it does not entirely consume us, we will do very well if others do not get even a whiff of the smoke upon us.

We are not likely to think of pride as a fire, but it is an evil that takes only a tiny breeze to fan its flame into a raging blaze that will certainly consume every vain soul who lingers in it. There are fires of dishonesty all around us burning in a hundred different forms. But we must be separate. We cannot allow even the smell of their smoke to touch our garments.

There are other fires of jealousy, hatred, bitterness, malice that are within our power to bypass, but strangely these fires do not cause the pain and discomfort that they should. Is it because of the deadening power of sin? If we find ourselves in such a conflagration, we should certainly walk out of it in a hurry.

Every child of God has had his or her fires to walk in. Joseph had his, among his jealous brothers and in Egypt. Moses had his, leading a band of unthankful ex-slaves; Elijah had his; Obadiah, Jeremiah and Paul had theirs; in fact, all of God's people have at one time or another found themselves in some kind of hot fire. Many have been consumed in these fires. Some have come through them but with the "smell of smoke" on their garments.

"One of the greatest dangers is that having passed through the fire one carries forever after some unmistakable evidence of the evil day." So

says a commentator on human nature. If we carry any evidence of our fires, let it be of a different kind entirely—let it be evidence of a stronger, purer character than smoke. When we have passed through the fire, we have not derived the benefit we should if we have not become stronger, better able to withstand some evil tendency than before. If our lives have been blackened by the experience, our spiritual radiance dimmed, our enthusiasm and hope of eternal life diminished, then we have nothing in common with Daniel's faithful companions. In fact, we can never claim companionship with any of God's faithful heroes.

If in our contact with the world we allow their conduct and conversation to taint or influence ours, "the smell of smoke" will be on our garments. If in an exasperating situation we speak as we should not, we are being harmed by the fire.

Saul suddenly found himself in a fire of jealousy when the people honored David's victories above his; and unfortunately, this fire consumed him.

Diotrephes fell victim to the fire of loving preeminence and thereby rejected the beloved John.

David was engulfed in many fires which, for a time, had power over him; but by his zeal for God, he finally extinguished these fires and washed his garments white and pure, so that even the smell of the fire was entirely gone.

We should take heart from the loving examples of faithfulness left us in the Word of God, and keep ourselves pure, entirely pure, letting not even the smell of the flesh, our own lower nature, touch our garments. But if the smoke has smudged us, there is no reason for us to continue with its odor, for our scent *can* be changed, we *can* become pure even as our Lord and Master is pure, if only we apply the simple expedient: "Wash and be clean." MM

The Things That Matter Most

I awoke this morning with a prayer to God for help to make the most of this day, to give all my mind to the things that matter most.

“**A**nd the Lord shall guide thee continually, and satisfy thy soul in drought, and make fat thy bones: and thou shalt be like a watered garden, and like a spring of water, whose waters fail not” (Isa. 58:11).

How Kathy was enjoying it, this time set apart each day for Bible reading, and this lovely new Bible Neal had brought home to her a week ago!

Isaiah, what a prophet! What a magnificent preview was his of the splendor of God’s Kingdom!

Such was Kathy’s reverie when the doorbell rang and in burst her sister-in-law Karen.

“O Kathy! Have you been down to Brandon’s yet? It’s their grand opening today, and you should see the bea-u-tiful coats they have on sale. Oh, I could spend a million dollars in that store! They just have *everything*! This town has never had anything like it before! Seven floors stocked with the newest of the new! It’s really great! Just look what I got—” Karen paused long enough to catch her breath while she spilled her armful of parcels onto the kitchen shelf and proceeded immediately to open the first. “Just look!”

“Well, Karen”—Kathy’s calm, quiet voice caused Karen to stop short and look at her—“I’ve just been basking in another realm. I awoke this morning with a prayer for help to make the most of this day, to give all my mind to the *things that matter most*.”

“And then I burst in with something like a political harangue! O Kathy, I’m sorry. Will you forgive me? Please? I say I want to be spiritually minded”—she folded the paper over the sweater she had unwrapped—“and I make great attempts at times, but, how I fail! Oh, I got completely unbalanced by all that merchandise, and the brand new store, and the people, and—”

“Yes, Karen, I know. That is why I try to make my errands to the city as infrequent as possible. I’m tempted the same way you are. So I try to be fortified to do just my business, and to keep intent on getting just what I need. We *do* have to take care of our temporal needs. But I’m realizing more and more that it takes some learning to know the *limits* of our needs sometimes.”

“You’re right, Kathy.”

“You spoke of the beautiful coats. Didn’t you just get a good new coat?”

“You mean that brown one?”

Karen nodded.

“Shouldn’t that one, along with what you already had, last you a long while, at least for the immediate future?”

Karen nodded again. “It isn’t that I need a coat, it was just the nice collection. They caught my eye, and when I looked at the prices and the quality, and—”

“Then you said you could spend a million dollars in that store. Isn’t that rather extravagant talk?”

“I didn’t really mean it, Kathy.”

“I’m sure you didn’t. But you know how carefully we have to watch our words....”

“Yes, I know. I would have done much better to wait and go to Brandon’s some day after they’ve been open awhile. O Kathy, I need a lot of help, a *great* lot, if I ever amount to anything for God’s Kingdom.”

“It’s a case of keeping the most important matters on top.”

“I should know that.”

“Neal reminds me often, trying to keep me impressed to make first things first.”

“I *want* to, Kathy, really I do.” Karen was overcome with the feeling of having “done it again.”

“No time to get discouraged. It’s so easy to stumble on some trivial

thing. We all have done it. We just have to keep thinking of the greater, more enduring things *ahead*. What we eat, or drink, or wear, and the countless *things* of temporal value that we can have—"

"*Things* really don't matter that much," Karen interrupted. "And they *must* be secondary."

"I like to think of the words of Paul: 'In my opinion, whatever we have to go through now is less than nothing compared with the magnificent future God has planned for us. The whole creation is on tiptoe to see the wonderful sight of the sons of God coming into their own.'"

"Oh, I love to think of it, Kathy, when I remember to. But—it, it so easily gets crowded out. The things we can see so easily gain precedence over the really *important* things. But I *will* do better, Kathy, I will. You just watch me, and help me when I slip again. I know God will have enough for us in the future—His storehouse is far better stocked than Brandon's."

"Yes, Karen, God has every good thing for us, *everything*. But it has its price, every item."

"That price is what we can pay right now, by keeping this old nature *under*—even when Brandon's has a grand opening."

"If we can pay the price God asks, think of all the time we'll have to wander around and look at all the good things He has prepared for us—they will be ours to enjoy forever!" Kathy's face was shining, and so was Karen's.

"Remember what we read about Jesus the other night, Karen?"

"You mean, 'Who for the joy that was set before him endured'? He endured even the cross, despising the shame, and now He is seated at His Father's right hand."

"And that's all because," added Kathy, "Jesus kept topmost in His mind *the things that matter most*. That's what *I'm* going to do." MM

A Morning Prayer

*Holy Father, in Thee is completeness,
wholeness, and fulness of joy.*

*I am grateful that as I have need of Thee,
Thou hast filled that need and even now hast
enabled me to walk with steady step into the demands
of this day.*

*Let my gratitude go deeper than need,
for Thou dost look upon the heart, not the outer life.*

*Let no sin hold me from confessing,
Let no hurt hold me from forgiving,
Let no reversal halt my acting upon my best intentions,
Let no criticism warp my spirit,
Let no disappointment make me bitter,
Let no failure find me hiding,
Let no circumstance keep me from prayer.*

*May this day be one of spiritual growth,
faithful obedience and renewed trust,
and wilt Thou bring me at last to a place
in Thine everlasting Kingdom,
in company with all Thy faithful children forever.
Amen.*

Self-Denial Week

This year, the week beginning Sunday, February 3, 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.

In observing this week, we will be following the pattern set by God's people in all ages. The Christian life is a life of discipline

and self-control, and if we cannot deny ourselves in things material, how can we perform the real, inner denials that will bring us to the stature of Christ?

The entire obligation of the sincere Christian centers around self-control. There is no other way to make our lives pleasing to God. We must learn to control our words, our thoughts, our feelings, our desires. This is the only way we can follow our perfect Example, who could say, "I do always those things that please Him."

Jesus practiced to achieve total mastery of Himself; let us do the same. MM

Walking with God

We often talk about the second coming of Christ and it is as it should be, for we are expecting Him not only as the King of the earth but also as our closest Friend as well. Perhaps sometimes we go back in our thoughts to that time, when we met Him for the first time as our perfect Example, our Savior and our dearest Friend.

John remembered not only the day but even the hour when Jesus "saw where he was staying and remained with him the rest of that day [It was then about four o'clock in the afternoon.]" (John 1:38, Phillips). That was the hour John met Jesus. That hour changed the course of his life.

But such is not always the case. It often happens that we walk with Jesus for a long time before we recognize Him as our beloved Friend, as it happened to the two disciples from Emmaus. Anyway, it is always a great joy and peace and happiness to know that He is close to us, just by our side, ready to help, if we only are ready to listen.

But being a Christian involves so much more than one's own relationship to God or Christ, however vital and meaningful that relationship may be. Every follower of Christ is under an obligation to translate his Christianity into all of life's relationships. We cannot have friends who do not choose to walk with God, for their ways of life will be completely different from God's. It will be clear immediately that we will have to choose, either to walk with them or "walk with God." There is no other possibility. The only way is to follow Christ, for it is the only way to obtain the purpose of our earth-life—life eternal.

*He "walked with God!" Could
grander words be written?*

*Not much of what he thought or said
is told.*

*Not where or what he wrought is even
mentioned.*

*He "walked with God"—brief words
of fadeless gold!*

*How many souls were strengthened
on his journey,—*

*Helped by his words, or prayers,
we may not know;*

*Still, this we read, words of
excelling grandeur—*

*He "walked with God" while yet
he walked below.*

And what does it really mean "to walk with God"? It is to keep the reality of God with us all the time, as David did. "I am always aware of the Lord's presence. He is so near, and nothing can shake me" (Ps. 16:8, Today's English Version). This presence of God is not to be an ecstasy. It has to have a real and practical purpose—to keep us right.

Poland

E. K.

Opportunity

How very wonderful to know that we, mere human beings, are given the opportunity and the great privilege—if we are obedient to God's commandments—of really making ourselves worthy of becoming members of His family, to be a peculiar treasure and precious in His sight. "Though the Lord be high, yet hath he respect unto the lowly." And, like the Psalmist, we too, may have the wonderfully comforting assurance that though we may "dwell in the uttermost part of the sea; even there shall thy hand lead me, and thy right hand shall hold me."

What great joy could be ours, if our faith will stand the test, even though we might have to pass through the fire and "smart for a little." Will it not be worth everything to be more precious than gold which perisheth? "And they shall be mine saith the Lord of hosts in that day when I make up my jewels and I will spare them, as a man spareth his own son that serveth him."

I send my sincere and most grateful thanks for the two very good and lovely sermon tapes, and also the beautiful "Message." I enjoyed them all very much indeed. It certainly is a great comfort and joy to read and hear the wonderful truths of God.

South Wales

R.B.

With Good Understanding

I am so glad I found that "The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom; a good understanding have all they who do his commandments." And we know if we don't have a good understanding, we will not know what to do. Also, great peace have they who love God's laws and nothing shall offend them (Ps. 119:165).

We know there will be trials and temptations as long as we live in this mortal body, but we have to meet them all with "It is written."

Let us all be very careful when we think we stand firm, for we can fall. The evils in this world seem to be multiplying at a very fast rate, so we must be very careful not to be caught up in them. Brother Paul foretold these evils that were coming; they have come at a rapid rate, proving and fulfilling the blessed Bible to the very letter.

South Carolina

H. C.

Still Striving

I have lately been reviewing old issues of the Megiddo Message, and I was especially drawn to the article in the February, 1978 issue, "A Second Chance?" How easy it is to grant yourself a little leeway when the going gets tough. But it is the tough sledding, so to speak, that makes the kind of character that the Lord wants. This life is just a vapor, grass that grows in a day and is cut down, so what we must do is to grow in stature and character that will please the Lord, be clothed in humility, having a broken and contrite heart.

Striving to be a Christian, to take on the name of the only begotten Son of God, is a challenge and a duty to be fulfilled to the very end. The Lord wants men and women who have courage and a straight backbone. So let us run with the horsemen and not become weary and then we can take on the raging Jordan with confidence.

Louisiana

D. K.

How Many Hours Left?

I calculated recently that we have approximately 605 thousand hours of life. We spend around 200 thousand hours sleeping, and another 75 thousand hours eating, etc. So that only leaves us 330 thousand hours to do all our work.

If I make *good* use of every hour, I will be able to do a lot better. Well, messages like that will make me a lot more aware of what I need to do, if I want this life to show results.

Alberta

E. S.

What's the reading on God's

No doubt you've seen it hanging on the wall, this instrument which is designed to register changes in the atmospheric pressure, as an aid to forecasting the weather. You may have marveled at its hand pointing steadily to rain—when the sun was shining. But when a few hours later the clouds began to gather—yes, you had to remember the trusty barometer. And soon it *was* raining!

This is not to suggest that the barometer is always accurate in its predictions. The weather bureau relies on it only in conjunction with other observations and instruments.

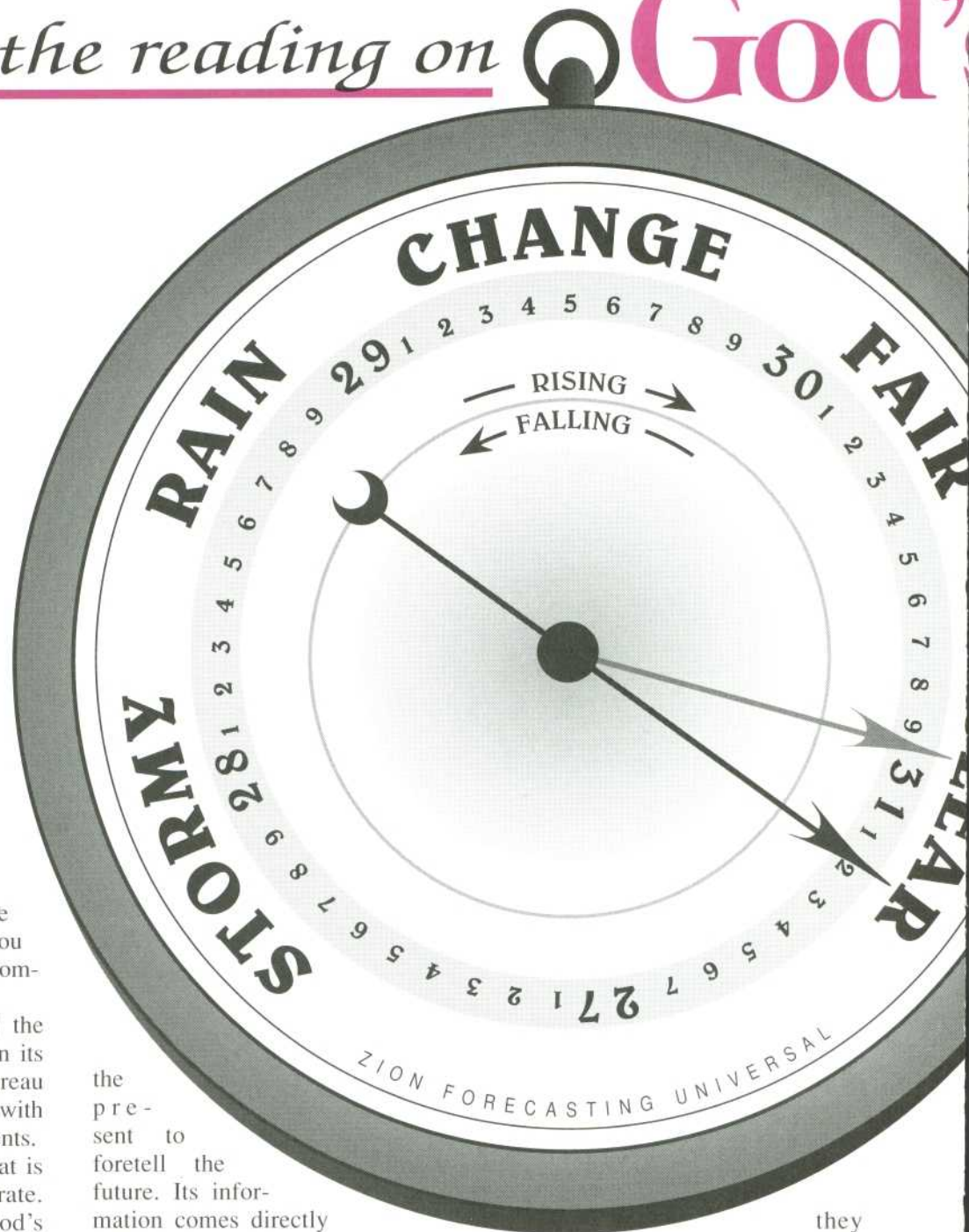
But there *is* a barometer that is accurate, unfailingly accurate. This special instrument is God's barometer.

This specially designed instrument measures not weather conditions but *world* conditions and *human* conditions. Unlike the barometer, it does not depend on

the present to foretell the future. Its information comes directly from its connection with heavenly sources of information. It knows because *God* knows.

No human hand can predict with any accuracy. But God's instruments are just as accurate today as

they were thousands of years ago when Jesus said, "I have told you before it come to pass, that, when it is come to pass, ye might believe" (John 14:29).



s Barometer?

We lift our hearts in thanksgiving to God that this marvelous and sensitive instrument has been placed in our hands. It was not completely perfected until A.D. 70.

But since that auspicious year not one improvement has been made in its delicate mechanism. One by the name of John the Revelator was the last workman to place in position the final gear and pinion which brought this great instrument to perfection. Since that day, it has not been touched.

The great multitudes say that the readings on this barometer are obscure, that they cannot be read with certainty. But like any other information, it is all "plain to him that understandeth and right to them that find knowledge" (Prov. 8:9). Sadly, though, few trouble themselves to take its daily readings; sadder still, we have been careless and heedless of its signals. We have rejected it, because we looked at its readings and, not seeing them reflect what we saw about us, we called it false, unsure, uncertain—when our very observation should have confirmed our faith in it! For it is a barometer, always looking ahead.

This God-given instrument is wonderfully accurate in all its revelations. Many are they who have picked up the Eternal's barometer, thinking they might tinker with it and improve its perfect mechanism, so that the readings might more

closely correspond to what they see (or wish to see). But in all this they have failed utterly, for it remains the same God-given instrument that it was when it left the workshop. We may not always understand, but we can never mistrust. What God has spoken is sure. Who are we to judge it otherwise? Who are *we* to challenge what *He* says is going to be?

So perfect is this instrument, so delicate, so specialized, that—even though it is not patented—no human hand has been able to duplicate it. Nor will it ever be copied successfully—far be it from the mind of man to fathom the mind of God! "For who has known the mind of the Lord, or who can instruct him?" (Rom. 11:34).

Years ago, this barometer was predicting a long dry spell, when rain from heaven was abundant. Yes, even while His people were enjoying the gifts of the Spirit poured out in a measure never before seen (during the Apostolic Age), the hand on the barometer was pointing to "Very Dry." Slowly, almost imperceptibly at first, then more and more rapidly the effects of drought began to be seen. Then felt. A few hundred years passed, and it was indeed very dry. The barometer had been right!

Then, some thousand years later, the hand on the barometer was pointing to change. How could it be, when the power of Rome was so strong? But again, the barometer proved true, and a period of change arrived.

Looking Ahead...

What are the indicators on God's barometer telling us now? What does this delicate instrument say about what is coming on the earth?

We look, and to our astonishment we see that it is pointing to "Fair and Clear."

Can it be? Is it possible that this instrument is accurate? With all the storminess in the world of today,

Amid the
stormy conditions today,
keep your eye on
God's barometer.
"Tomorrow" will be
"Fair and Clear."

unrest and unsettled conditions—even war—in different parts of the earth, how can God's barometer be predicting "Fair and Clear"? How can it escape being influenced by the tumultuous weather prevailing worldwide?

The reason is that God's barometer sees beyond the moment that is.

It even sees beyond the moment that is coming, to predict the ultimate condition which will soon be seen worldwide. True, conditions are stormy. True, they will grow more stormy. There shall "be a time of trouble, such as never was since there was a nation" when Michael, the great Prince stands up and claims authority as earth's rightful Heir and all-glorious King (Dan. 12:1). Conditions will be so stormy that the battle will rage worldwide. But it will be a battle different from any that has been before. This battle will be a battle of right against wrong, and none but the wrong will suffer. This battle, which the Bible calls Armageddon (Rev. 16:16), will result in the worldwide defeat of everything that opposes justice, equity, righteousness and goodwill. This will be the greatest triumph earth has ever seen, with the result that conditions will begin at once to turn from "Stormy" to "Fair and Clear," until that glorious condition prevails worldwide.

Are you tempted to feel downhearted or discouraged at the tumultuousness of the present world picture, with the sea and waves roaring and men's hearts failing them for fear? It is only the Word of God fulfilled. This is the very condition God predicted. It is here! We are seeing it with our very eyes! And what does Jesus tell us to do "when we see these things come to pass"? "Look up," He says, "and lift up your heads, for your redemption draweth nigh" (Luke 21: 25-28).

Redemption—release—liberation—deliverance—salvation! Yes, look at God's barometer and *look up!* Soon our Redeemer will appear, for the deliverance and salvation of His people and all who will submit to His righteous authority.

Amid all the stormy conditions today, keep your eye on God's barometer and know that "fair and clear" will soon be a reality—and once that condition has arrived, it shall prevail for ever, even for ever and ever!

*No sky shall ever be o'ercast,
Eternal day has dawned at last.
The angry sea has ceased to roar,
For peace has come forevermore.*

The Heir of

The Heir of the world is coming!
It is Jesus, the Son of God;
He is coming in full power and glory
To rule with an unbroken rod.

He has gone to a far-off country,
To receive His instructions on high;
But He's coming, oh yes, He is coming,
To bring peace to Earth by and by!

Through Paul the apostle beloved,
He is mentioned to us of the deed;
And through and by him 'tis asserted
That Christ is the only true seed.

We know He's the Heir, just and lawful,
For the record is true and correct;
And He's holding a clear and clean title
To Earth—it has not one defect.

He's the Great Prince of Peace, and He's coming,
And we're looking with longing eye
To behold Him in bright regal splendor
Descending from God's throne on high.

Oh, the peace, sweetest peace He'll establish,
'Twill extend from pole unto pole;
There will be no more war, no more bloodshed,
All lands will be under control.

He's the King of the world, and He's coming
To bind all the nobles of earth
And establish a just, righteous Kingdom,
Of beauty, of power and worth.

the World Is Coming!

He's the Judge, the great Judge, and He's
coming
In majesty soon He'll appear;
Our eye will behold Him in glory,
And His voice—oh, so gentle!—we'll hear.

Will that voice speak to us the grand
sentence,
"Good and faithful, my servant, well
done"?
Or will it speak words sad and solemn,
"Depart, for you are not my son"?

The sharp holocaust Armageddon,
Will be waged by this strong noble One,
It will be of all conflicts the fiercest,
All unlike any other ere won.

Will the kings of the earth and their rulers
Come and lay all their trophies down;
To the Master give full surrender,
And list to His voice when it sounds?

Nay, they all will rise up as in fury
To resist with much wrath and contempt
All His forces for good and advancement—
But quickly their strength will be spent.

All nations will be in this conflict,
They'll muster their hosts far and near;
Two thirds will be cut off in battle,
One third will bow down in great fear.

God's people will all find deliverance,
As the prophet named Joel foretold;
They'll be kept in His safe, blessed
chamber
Prepared to be sheep for His fold.

Oh, the Shepherd, chief Shepherd is
coming
With blessings to fill all the earth;
To give all who love His appearing
An e'erlasting crown of great worth.

The comfort, sweet comfort He'll bring us
Will far more than amply repay
For the work and the toil and the labor,
We have spent through probation's day.

Oh, the Day, glorious Day of Almighty!
Its dawning is now almost here;
The sound of the rumbling chariots
Seems to fall on the listening ear.

We know that that Day is approaching,
Earth's Ruler will soon, soon appear,
Oh, let us each one now get ready
To meet Him with joy, not with fear.

Come, Jesus, oh, come to Thy sheepfold,
And reign on Thy throne here on earth;
We'll own Thee as King, Judge and Ruler,
For Thou art the true Heir by birth!

God's Spiritual Creation

Genesis—An Overview

ONE great system of truth, one grand plan of salvation, one glorious means of participating in that salvation is the sublime theme of the Bible. This inspiring theme threads its golden way through the visions of the seers, the dreams of the prophets, the revelations of the Son of God, and the teachings of His disciples.

Though the theme is the same, the styles of treating that theme are as distinct as the writers themselves, who were chosen from all walks of life, from the profound lawgiver of Israel to the simple herdsman of Tekoa, to David the king. Sometimes the theme is expressed in plain language, sometimes in figurative. Compare the parables of our Lord, the types and shadows of the Pentateuch, the deep symbolisms of Ezekiel, and the straightforward style of such a man as James. Yet all were God's pens, used to write His message for the generations of believers who would depend on it for their lifeline of faith.

What is the purpose of Genesis? Think of the Bible as prefaced with an outline of its contents, a summary of its important points incorporated in three opening chapters. These chapters give in brief, abridged form the substance of its message. The style is figurative; more specifically, allegorical.

An Allegory

What is an allegory? According to Webster, an allegory is "the written, oral, or artistic expression by means of symbolic fictional figures and actions of truths or generalizations about human conduct or experience."

An allegory is a combination of metaphors to tell a story or teach a lesson. Using figurative language it puts deep spiritual perceptions into vivid, living pictures, so that we may use our knowledge of the familiar to understand the unfamiliar. It uses people, objects, images and expressions as mediums of teaching. The people, the objects, the images are no less "real" because used figuratively, but in the allegory they are symbolic.

Symbolism is used freely in the literary field to add strength, color and brilliance to composition. Shall we deny the Almighty Creator the privilege which we grant to common literature? And shall we be dull of comprehension and fail to grasp His meanings of His symbolisms?

In Psalm 80 we find an example of an allegory: "Thou hast brought a vine out of Egypt...and planted it" (v. 8). The nation of Israel bore no resemblance literally to a vine. But knowing the nature of a "vine," we can understand more about the Israelite people. Like a vine, the Israelites were transplanted from one "soil" (geographic location) to another, where they took root and grew as a nation. This type of language lets us use what we know about "vines" to understand the nation of Israel.

In the fourth chapter of Galatians, the apostle Paul uses an allegory, in which he compares the bondwoman (Hagar) and the freewoman (Sarah) to the two covenants, the first from Sinai and the second from Christ. Paul says specifically that this is "an allegory" (v. 24), a story he is using to illustrate his point. In this allegory he uses each person to represent a group of persons.

In like manner, Adam and Eve are used in the Genesis allegory. There was a literal Adam and a literal Eve, but in the allegory they are representative persons.

"Comparing Spiritual Things With Spiritual"

The apostle Paul gave an important rule which must govern all studies of inspired writings: "Comparing spiritual things with spiritual" (I Cor. 2:13). In other words, we must be consistent. Applying this rule to the Genesis account of creation, we must be careful not to combine literal applications with spiritual. In other words, we cannot have a symbolic Adam and Eve eating literal fruit in a spiritual garden. Nor can we have a literal Adam and Eve eating symbolic fruit in a symbolic garden. The garden, even the act of tilling the ground, their making themselves clothes, the serpent that tempted them—all must be spiritually understood and applied, as teaching deeper spiritual truths, if we would properly apply Paul's rule. To keep any part of the allegory literal, as a narrative account, is to distort the meaning and miss its intended message.

Many times in studying Scripture we will find that more than one symbol is used to teach the same principle of truth. For example, we find Adam and Eve used to represent the two classes of believers, faithful and unfaithful, who are called to work in the garden of the Lord. The trees in the garden may also be representative of persons serving God, some bearing good fruit, some evil. We find both the river and the light representing the knowledge of God; both are symbols of God's illuminating, life-imparting knowledge. When we approach the Bible as revealing one plan of salvation and one message to humankind, we find that one part explains another. The

symbols in Genesis are explained by the prophets, or by our Lord, or His apostles. Some are defined by one author, some by another; but all are defined within Scripture. The Bible thus becomes its own expositor. The message through all is the same: God's offer to humankind, extending the opportunity to participate in His higher plan, to comply with His laws and be rewarded for what they have done. This offer is the message of the entire Bible, one harmonious whole, combining in one earnest appeal to live the higher life and thereby merit a share in the glories of God's eternal plan of salvation in the coming Paradise of

Think of the Bible as prefaced with an outline of its contents, a summary of its important points. That is Genesis, chapters 1-3.

delight on earth made new. The different symbols are simply the Eternal's method in seeking illustrations to impress us with important truths.

Literal Or Spiritual?

One problem in a study of this nature lies in deciding what should be taken as literal and what as spiritual. Apart from the command to compare spiritual with spiritual, what can we use as a guideline?

God has made us creatures of reason; He has given us minds capable of comprehending, remembering, and relating, and He expects us to

God's Spiritual Creation

use them. Through the prophet Isaiah He wrote, "Come now, and let us reason together" (v. 18). Can we think that a God of reason, who has endowed His children with reason, would condemn us for doing what He recommends?

Now what can we reasonably conclude about guidelines for deciding what should be literal and what should be spiritual? There are at least three situations where we should investigate the possibility of a spiritual application of a passage:

1) *If a passage does not "make sense" understood literally.* If it does not fit in with the facts as we know them, we may safely conclude that there is another intended meaning—a spiritual one.

2) *If a passage or a symbol does not harmonize with plain Bible teaching.* In studying the Scriptures, we must be careful not to array one text against another but to seek harmony in all. God, we know, does not contradict Himself. Contradictions come from our misunderstandings. If one statement seems to contradict another, we should look for a possible misapplication, perhaps one

statement that should be understood spiritually.

3) *If a statement does not harmonize with clear observations of science.* God is the God of all true knowledge. This does not mean that every scientific theory will harmonize with God's knowledge—far from it. But no facts of science will conflict with the Bible properly understood. If there is a contradiction, there is a problem with our understanding either of the Bible or of a scientific observation. For the God of science is the God of the Bible. And very possibly, this is a situation where the Bible was intended to be spiritually understood.

Our reason for taking the first of Genesis as an allegory is *all of the above*. The creation narrative does not "make sense" understood literally. Nor does its message harmonize with plain Bible teaching. Nor is it in accord with the clearest observations of science. We have, therefore, every reason to investigate a possible spiritual application of the first of Genesis.

We cannot expect to find the answers to the Genesis allegory in

Genesis. The God who inspired the writing of Genesis inspired also the writing of the other 65 books of the Bible, and all together they combine to present one God, and one faith, and one plan of salvation. So we must compare Scripture with Scripture, symbol with symbol, to discover what God is teaching us. And always we will be seeking harmony, trying to harmonize the less obvious with plain Bible teaching.

When we study and compare the various metaphors and symbols of Genesis with corresponding explanations used elsewhere in the Bible, what do we find? Let us outline briefly:

The Bible teaches that this earth was not created in vain, neither was it created to be destroyed by human inventions, nor defaced by an ill-behaved, undisciplined and pleasure-mad society bent on all the evils and abuses we see today. The earth was created to be inhabited by a race of righteous individuals who will carry out God's purposes perfectly (Isa. 45:18; Num. 14:21). We pray, "Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven" (Matt. 6:10). And we are confident that this prayer of our Lord's shall meet its literal and complete fulfillment in the consummation of God's grand plan of the ages. The initial chapters of Genesis describe the means by which this utopian state is to be realized—not through a process of literal but of spiritual creation which, in simple terms, is the work of cutting, carving, shaping, remolding the characters of men and women until they become fit members of a perfect and eternal society.

The Garden of Eden we shall find to be the place where this work of moral development is carried on. As a garden is a tract of fertile land which yields to cultivation, so the Garden of God is composed of men and women in whose hearts His

Literal or Spiritual?

There are at least three situations where the possibility of a spiritual application of a passage of Scripture should be considered:

- 1) *If the passage does not "make sense" understood literally.* If it does not fit in with the facts as we know them.
- 2) *If the passage or a symbol in the passage does not harmonize with plain Bible teaching.* We must be careful not to array one text against another. God, we know, does not contradict Himself. Contradictions come from our misunderstandings.
- 3) *If the surface meaning of a Bible statement does not harmonize with clear observations of science.* The God of science is the God of the Bible.

Divine law takes root and flourishes abundantly. Song of Solomon 4:12 teaches the garden to be the Church, and Isaiah 5:7 is explicit: "The vineyard of the Lord of hosts is the house of Israel, and the men of Judah his pleasant plant."

The River and Trees of Eden are figures of the many "helps" promised to those working in God's garden. The river of life cleanses away all filthiness of the flesh (Ps. 65:9; II Cor. 7:1); the tree of wisdom bears fruit which gives life (Prov. 3:13, 18; Ezek. 47:12). The trees also symbolize the constant growth in character which is required of all workers in the garden. "The righteous shall flourish like the palm tree: he shall grow like a cedar in Lebanon" (Ps. 92:12).

The Serpent of Genesis is defined in the Bible as evil men and women, such as the Pharisees of Jesus' day (Matt. 23:33). Broadly speaking, the serpent tendencies form a part of every member of the human family. We are "by nature the children of wrath" (Eph. 2:3). Only as we resist and put to death our instinctive serpent-like nature do we become children of God. No such serpent as was seen in Eden has ever been encountered, but the serpent of Genesis will remain alive, active, visible, as long as there are evil men and women.

The Word of God sown in the soil of human hearts produces not only the faithful Church, but an unfaithful class as well. **The Cursed Ground**, the unproductive portion of the garden, yields only briars and thorns, the fruits of the flesh (Gal. 5:19-21). Such ground is destined to receive the curse of the Judge when the harvest is gathered and the wheat is separated from the tares.

The Heavens and Earth of Genesis symbolize the moral development and perfecting of men and

women to form a new heaven and a new earth. This is the identical development which goes on in the garden, the same plan of the ages in motion. It is the preparation of a perfect society to populate the utopian world, only stated in other terms.

We read in Genesis 1:1, "In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth." Heaven in Scriptural phraseology signifies rulers; and earth, subjects, people ruled over (Isa. 1:2, 10). By consulting Peter we find the distinguishing characteristic of this heaven and earth—objects of God's new creation—to be righteousness: "new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness" (II Pet. 3:13).

We "look for," we earnestly pray, we eagerly anticipate such a society to replace the corrupt systems of the present. But when shall we see that righteous government? Peter answers. Our Lord's Second Advent will bring the dissolution of the present arrangement and the inauguration of the new heavens and a new earth.

To all who seek a place in the new creation, light is indispensable. By no other means can we find our way in paths of righteousness through this night of darkness. For this purpose God provides **Two Great Lights**, the lesser light which gives partial illumination in this night of spiritual darkness, His written Word (Ps. 119:105; II Pet. 1:19), and the greater light which shall arise in the new creation, Christ the Sun of righteousness (Mal. 4:2).

These Scriptural definitions of the two lights of Genesis solve the problem which the literalists have encountered in explaining how grass could grow before the creation of the sun. According to the Bible, grass is used as a symbol for the human family (Isa. 40:7), and that

family existed on the earth long ages before the Sun of righteousness arises in the new world.

Next we shall discuss **The Man in God's Image**. This figurative term is described in God's grand plan of the ages in multiple ways. It is introduced in the allegory by the creation of new heavens and earth, and repeated by means of other parallel figures. How could the human race be literally made in the physical image of God when it is beset by such physical infirmity and moral instability? No, the man to be made in God's image is holy even as God is holy (I Pet. 1:16). This man is multitudinous, composed of

The earth was created to be inhabited by a race of righteous individuals who will carry out God's purposes perfectly.

Christ the Head, and the Church His body (Col. 1:18). To develop the moral likeness of their Maker, members of the Church must become pure in heart and clean of hands. In the words of Paul, they must be "created in righteousness and true holiness" (Eph. 4:24). This is a gigantic undertaking, and one might ask: Do the resulting benefits of a righteous life compensate for the effort involved? The book of Proverbs states the benefits and leaves us to judge: "Righteousness delivereth from death" (Prov. 10:2). Can any other effort of which

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Purpose, Not Chance

"But Israel shall be saved in the Lord with an everlasting salvation: ye shall not be ashamed nor confounded world without end. For thus saith the Lord that created the heavens; God himself that formed the earth and made it; he hath established it, he created it not in vain, he formed it to be inhabited: I am the Lord; and there is none else."
—Isaiah 45:17-18

The first part of our text gives proof that the salvation of the Bible is future, substantial and everlasting; not a feeling or state of mind attained in a moment of excitement. God's salvation, the salvation for which we strive, is worth having. Once we attain it we have nothing more to fear; we shall be safely inside the Kingdom of God, "equal unto the angels," never to experience pain, disease, sorrow, or death "world without end." This also refutes two false theories: the theological error that the physical world will be burned up at the Last Judgment, and the pseudo-scientific fallacy that in time it will grow old and cold and uninhabitable. "World without end" means just that. "One generation passeth away, and another generation cometh: but the earth abideth for ever" (Eccl. 1:4).

The second part takes us into a more controversial field, although there is really no need for controversy. It is the fashion in various patterns of modern thought to doubt or deny that there is any purpose in creation as we see it. To them the universe is a haphazard affair, the product of blind chance, largely incapable of supporting life as we know it. Man is an accident which has become a problem. Life itself is "a brief and discreditable episode upon one of the minor planets." Fortunately for those who love life and righteousness, the Bible does not support this dark view.

The exquisite order in the physical universe, celestial and terrestrial, becomes utterly impossible to explain if we deny purpose in creation. There are but two conceivable positions: either it came about by chance, or by design. The theory of chance, dear as it is to the materialists, is ruled out. So complicated and so delicate is the balance of nature which makes life as we know it possible, that this is not chance nor caprice; this is the finger of a purposeful God. It is infinitely more

difficult to deny it than to accept it. Consideration of the wonders of nature demonstrates beyond all question that there are design and purpose in it all. A program is being carried out in all its infinite detail by the Eternal. But this program is not revealed in the book of animate nature, nor in the record of the rocks, nor yet in the thoughts of the wise of this world. To learn God's plan we must go to His revealed Word—the Bible.

Our text states His purpose in simple words. "He created it not in vain, he formed it to be inhabited."

But this is by no means the ultimate goal. All that we see, all that the earth has experienced to the present moment, is but the introduction to the grand symphony of Creative Design. The earth was formed for a far grander and nobler purpose—to be the home of the righteous "world without end." "Blessed are the meek," said Jesus, "for they shall inherit the earth" (Matt. 5:5). Read that noble chapter, the 37th Psalm, and count the number of times this truth is stated and restated. In every case the promise is restricted to "the righteous," "the upright," "the meek," proving that it has no reference to the present social order, in which the meek survive only by grace of Divine protection in a world dominated by the wicked. Throughout the Scriptures the golden thread of promise runs, comforting and sustaining, as in Isa. 51:11, "Therefore the redeemed of the Lord shall return, and come with singing unto Zion; and everlasting joy shall be upon their head: they shall obtain gladness and joy; and sorrow and mourning shall flee away," becoming very definite in the last Letter, where the redeemed sing, "Thou...hast made us unto our God kings and priests: and we shall reign *on the earth*" (Rev. 5:9-10).

This is the purpose—or part of it. The primary phase, which includes our time, is the development of the "kings and priests" who will rule with Christ in the

future Kingdom on earth. The Millennial phase of the plan will produce the populace of the Kingdom, "a great multitude, which no man could number" (Rev. 7:9).

Together these two classes of immortals will fill the earth, fulfilling the oath of the Eternal in Numbers 14:21, "As truly as I live, all the earth shall be filled with the glory of the Lord." His glory is Israel, spiritual Israel, His true soldiers (Isa. 46:13).

This is His purpose, and what matter if we know little or nothing of the steps leading up to its reality? What matter if the Creator took uncounted millions of years to set the stage for only 7,000 years of action? Those dim aeons of the past are of no consequence to us in our quest for that "everlasting salvation"; our interest is in the present and its bearing upon the eternal future.

To suppose that this little earth, wonderful as it is, is the best work or the only concern of the Almighty; to think that the billions of stars and planets in infinite space are uninhabited and uninhabitable, is as absurd as it is unscriptural. What is done here is not an isolated expression of creative power, but is according to the eternal purpose of the Creator, "of whom the whole family in heaven and earth is named" (Eph. 3:11, 15). Life as we know it and our highly specialized balance of nature might not be possible in any other spot; yet there exists a vast reservoir of life as we know it *not*—immortal life. Worlds shining in the vault of heaven are filled with immortal beings, God's finished work, and they shine by His spirit (Dan. 12:3).

Nature is plastic in the hands of its Master and Maker, and His creatures can live wherever and under whatever conditions He decrees. Life has existed from eternity past on heavenly bodies.

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

Words for the Living

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

Our Master is able to carry us through if we stay with the old ship of Zion.



We must be always zealously affected in these good things. Always. Not only at the start but all the time.



Serve the Lord with all your mind, might and strength; then you will never be despondent or blue.



If we strive to put our posts beside the Lord's posts, we shall be consumed. To set our thresholds to step upon, and our posts to lean upon, is to defile His holy place, and is an abomination in His sight.



Keep in the love of God, looking for His mercy, looking to be presented spotless before God.



The fleeting things of the present are so little, not even a half penny compared to the future blessings.

We will either be the hay, wood and stubble, or the gold tried as by fire. It would seem that we would want to be the latter and show it by our everyday lives.



It is easy to be confident and still be against God; hence we must look well to our ways.



My wild horse has to be pushed and pulled into the barn. Someone said to me, "That is the way we get into the Kingdom." No, it is not. We have to be interested in the things of the future. God says, "Here are the good things;" and we must walk right up and take hold of them.



Keep yourselves unspotted from the world. God hates these spots.



"When Christ, who is our life, shall appear, then shall ye also appear with him in glory." Seeing such high exaltation awaits us, should it not be sufficient to cause us to put to death our fleshly instincts? (Col. 3:4-8).

"The mercy of the Lord is from everlasting to everlasting" (Psalm 103:17). God in His mercy has given probation and "everlasting salvation" to their now-glorified inhabitants, just as He will give it

to our race. There is so little that we know, and so much that we do not know. Therefore we need not venture into deeper waters until we have mastered those which lie near at hand.

MM



Conversion or Salvation?

"If it is true that Paul was converted (saved) when he said, 'Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?' (Acts 9:6; 22:10), why did he still have sins that needed to be washed away (Acts 22:16)?"

It seems that you may be confusing the terms conversion and salvation; *conversion* being the time of one's initial conviction, or turning from the way of darkness into Christ's way of light, becoming enlightened and learning of God's way of salvation; *salvation* being the ultimate and eternal deliverance or change from mortality to immortality.

Some evangelists make much of a person's being "saved" by a simple expression of belief in Christ as their Savior.

The Bible nowhere says that conversion is the same as salvation. Jesus said plainly, "He that shall endure unto the end, the same shall be saved" (Matt. 24:13). Paul's conversion was his turning point. He was immediately obedient to the heavenly vision (Gal. 1:16). But this initial conversion did not make him free from sin. Years later he was still fighting sin. In his letter to the Romans he spoke of the struggle he felt between the old nature and the new, how that "when I would do

good, evil is present with me" (Rom. 7:18-23). He compared the Christian life to a race, a fight (I Cor. 9:25-27), and pictured himself as in the running, not having yet received the prize: "Brethren, I count not myself to have apprehended: but this one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before, I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus" (Phil. 3:13-14). He was still "pressing on," if by any means he might "attain unto the resurrection of the dead" (Phil. 3:11).

By the end of his life he had achieved, he had removed the sins from his record and was ready to face the Judge. Triumphantly he wrote, "I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith: Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day: and not to me only, but unto all them also that love his appearing" (II Tim. 4:7-8). Only then was he ready for the great "crown," salvation.

Paul's conversion on the Damascus road was only the start of a lifelong commitment of service to God.

◆ Symbolic heavens and earth?

"I must disagree with your *Megiddo Message*, November 1990, 'The New Heavens and Earth.' You say the new heavens and earth is symbolic and does not mean a physical change. However, II Pet. 3:10 is *not* symbolic for a good reason. Common sense dictates that this physical universe of positive and negative elements can't be adequate for immortals. It must be a *perfect* universe with *perfect* beings. No other (especially this physical one) will do. Verse 13 gives the answer. Righteousness *cannot* dwell on a physical earth."

You seem to be saying that the new heavens and earth of II Peter 3 must be a literal new creation because the present creation is imperfect, and an imperfect creation is not adequate for immortal inhabitants, that an imperfect physical world cannot be the dwelling place of righteousness.

While we are not directly told, you are doubtless correct that immortals will live in a perfect environment. The present earth, even with sin and evil removed, is not perfect. We are told that sickness, disease, and all aspects of mortality will be removed. These

steps alone will go a long way toward making a perfect earth. Negative elements *will* be removed.

The fact that righteousness is to be the chief component of the new creation is much more appropriate to the understanding of the new earth as new inhabitants than a new physical creation. No physical inanimate object can possess righteousness. However, people can be righteous, and we read that the inhabitants of the new world *will* be righteous. When we apply the terms "heavens" and "earth" to rulers and those ruled over, we have a thought that is in harmony with Bible teaching and Bible symbolism.

When we use the term "symbolic," we are not thinking of *nonmaterial*, but rather of one term being used to describe another. When we read of the heavens "being on fire" and "melting" (II Pet. 3:12), we do not picture any cataclysm among the millions and billions of stars and galaxies above us; rather, the term "heavens" is used as a symbol of the ruling powers of earth, which will be removed to make place for Christ's new and better government. "Nevertheless we, according to his promise, look for new heavens [new rulers] and a new earth [new populace], wherein dwelleth righteousness" (II Pet. 3:13). The "new" heavens and earth are symbols of that which is physical, i.e., new rulers and populace; and in these will dwell righteousness.

◆ Good Luck?

"A friend told me that 'Good Luck' is not a phrase Christians should use, but I cannot understand why. I have been in the habit of saying 'Good Luck!' much as one would say 'Good bye,' when someone is leaving, as though wishing them the best. What can be wrong with this?"

The dictionary defines luck as "whatever happens to a person by chance; fortune, good fortune, success," and in comment says: "luck stresses the operation of pure chance in producing a favorable result."

The expression "Good Luck" seems to have come from the universal desire for good fortune, as a way of showing that one has good feelings toward others and wishes all to go well for them, especially in those factors of life that are beyond human control. As Christians this is the proper spirit; we are forbidden to wish ill upon anyone, even if they have wronged us. We are to "Recompense to no man evil for evil" (Rom. 12:17). All vengeance must be left to God. "Vengeance is mine; I will repay, saith the Lord" (Rom. 12:19).

However, wishing another "good luck" is pure chance, and falls short of the Christian's ideal in that it does not recognize or acknowledge the overruling will of God.

The Bible tells us in the book of Ecclesiastes that "time and chance happen to them all" (Eccl. 9:11, RSV). "All" includes believer and non-believer. The Christian who lives within the will of God, being a member of the human race, is also subject to the rule of "time and chance"; however, for such a one, "time and chance" is limited by the overruling will of God, who has promised not to allow any circumstance or happenstance that would hinder him in fulfilling his obligations to God so as to qualify for eternal life (I Tim. 4:8).

Everyone naturally wants success and favorable events; but the Christian does not face life trusting in the blind forces of luck; rather, he is trusting God who has promised to make all happenstance work for eternal good. The true

believer does not have to trust "luck" for the good fortune he wants but is following a divinely prescribed pattern of life which he *knows* will give him what is truly "best," both in this world and in the world to come. At the same time he recognizes that that "best" is an evaluation from God's long-range point of view; it may or may not appear "best" at the moment, from a human point of view.

Trusting in "luck" comes perilously close to trusting in a false god, a god of fate, or a "good luck" charm as having some unexplainable and uncontrollable power to bring good. Many ancient cultures worshiped gods of fortune and luck which of course brought them no benefit.

Christians do not live by any jurisdiction of "Lady Luck" but by faith in God who has promised to work all things together for the good for the good of His children (Rom. 8:28).

"Luck" might be an appropriate term if one were trying to catch fish, or were hoping for good weather on a certain day, or wanting success in a temporal pursuit; though even here, God might overrule the elements of time and chance to teach His child a lesson, to save from danger, or to chasten or correct.

We believe firmly that the whole disposing of a Christian's life is in the hands of the Lord, not in the hands of luck or any forces of blind chance. For this reason, "good luck" is not very useful in the vocabulary of the Christian. For a general word of parting, it might be more appropriate to ask for the blessing of God and say "Good-bye," meaning "The Lord be with you," or the greeting used by the early Christians, "Maranatha!" meaning "The Lord is coming!"

MM

God's Spiritual Creation

(Continued from page 21)

humans are capable procure so rich a boon? Those who love life, who seek more of life than the meager taste which this brief existence affords, those who aspire to that richer, fuller, more abundant life where death shall be unknown, gladly yield the requisite righteousness. And when the Church becomes morally perfect it shall be clothed with immortality, death swallowed up in victory. Then the man of Genesis will be complete and will be mentally, morally and physically like his Maker.

When this man has attained the physical likeness of his Maker, he becomes the man of Genesis who receives dominion. His dominion is not to extend over the literal animal kingdom, but rather "from sea to sea, and from the river unto the ends of the earth" (Ps. 72:8). His dominion shall be worldwide over humankind whose character traits are by nature comparable to those of the animal kingdom.

God's grand plan of the ages is constructed to appeal to our highest aspirations. It offers honor, glory, power, might, dominion in the world to come. Jesus said, "He that overcometh, and keepeth my works unto the end, to him will I give power over the nations" (Rev. 2:26). This is the plan taught in Genesis 1:26.

Lastly we shall discuss **Adam and Eve**, figures of all who serve God in all ages, not the first man and woman created by God (recall that their son Cain had no difficulty finding a wife—even building a city—in the land of Nod—Gen. 4:16-17). Adam and Eve were simply the first to agree to serve in God's garden and work for eternal life. By their actions, good and bad, they became symbolic characters for all time. Their names are employed in the allegory to represent two classes, faithful and unfaithful.

We see glimpses of these two classes in all ages. Abel brought a righteous offering, while his brother's was rejected by reason of the evil designs he concealed in his heart. Christ's inner circle produced the beloved John, also the betrayer, Judas. Among Paul's disciples was a faithful son Timothy, also a Demas who forsook him.

The Genesis allegory presents the sad but inescapable fact that many who set out to participate in God's plan of the ages never arrive at their desired destination. The fault is not with the plan but with themselves. They covenant to work in the garden but remain inactive; they agree to resist the serpent's wiles and then yield; they promise to avoid the forbidden fruit and then partake. At Christ's coming this class, the unfaithful Adam and Eve, shall be dealt with according to their works. They shall be expelled from the garden, "driven from light into darkness, and chased out of the world" (Job 18:18).

At the same time the faithful Adam and Eve shall remain to bloom in perpetual vigor and unfading beauty in the Paradise of God—this earth made over new.

When at the end of the Millennial reign of Christ and His saints every offensive element is eliminated and only a perfect and eternal society remains, God's grand plan of the ages as outlined in Genesis shall be fully consummated. The earth shall be filled with a righteous people who are saved with an everlasting salvation (Num. 14:21; Isa. 45:17).

The grand plan of the ages shall not fail, for God Almighty is its Author—He who is able to declare the "end from the beginning, and from ancient times the things that are not yet done" (Isa 46:10). "God is no man to break his word, no mortal to change his mind; he promises, and does he not perform? Does he not carry out his word?" (Num. 23:19, Moffatt). His purposes are as unalterable as the seasons, or the succession of day and night; and when the Kingdom has come and God's will is done on earth as in heaven above, then shall the jubilant populace repeat again the theme of the spheres, "Blessed be the Lord,... there hath not failed one word of all his good promise which he promised" (I Kings 8:56). MM

(Next Issue: *The Heavens and Earth Of Genesis*)

God Is Preparing...for Us?

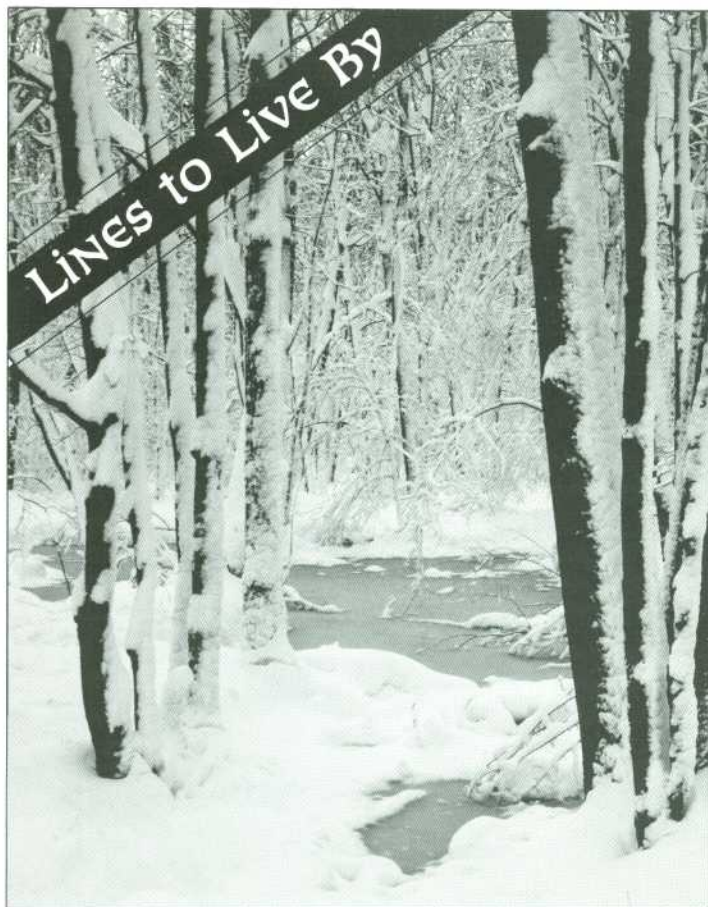
(Continued from page 2)

The author of Hebrews speaks yet again of these elaborate preparations God is making for His own. Each one of the heroes of faith, he says, set their heart on God and what He had promised to do for them. "Now they desire a better country, that is, an heavenly; wherefore God is not ashamed to be called their God: for he hath prepared for them a city" (Heb. 11:16). God is preparing a city, the same symbolic

city which John saw descending from heaven, "the holy city, the new Jerusalem" (Rev. 21:1-6).

We cannot even begin to imagine all that God is preparing. And do we realize those preparations can be for *us*?

Let's do *our* part of the preparing now, so that we can be ready to share the great and wonderful blessings which God has prepared for those who love Him! MM



Don't compare your goodness with the goodness of other men, but with that of the Man of Galilee.

Sin is an ill guest, for if it remains it always sets its lodging on fire.

If you want to realize your own importance, put your finger into a bowl of water, take it out, and look at the hole.

Don't be afraid of opposition. Remember, a kite rises against, not with, the wind.

Sin is the greatest of all detectives: be sure it will find you out.

We recognize other people's faults so easily because they are so much like our own.

Live as if Christ died yesterday, rose this morning and is coming back tomorrow.

It takes courage to say what you believe when you know the reaction will not be favorable and you could remain silent.

At the bottom of most fears will be found an over-active mind and an under-active body. We generate fears while we sit still. We overcome them by action.

Adversity, like winter weather, is of use to kill the vermin which summer prosperity produces and nourishes.

Remember each time someone has your potential sized up that you have the power to make his estimate obsolete.

*Lord, let the day be one of light,
Build all our labors unto Thee;
Thou, who hast brought us out of night,
Keep us in strong sincerity.*

We would fill the hours with the sweetest things
If we had but a day;
We should drink alone at the purest springs
In our upward way;
We should love with a lifetime's love in an hour
If the hours were few;
We should rest not for dreams but for fresher power
To be and to do.

We should guide our wayward or wearied wills
By the clearest light;
We should keep our eyes on the heavenly hills
If they lay in sight;
We should trample the pride and the discontent
Beneath our feet;
We should take whatever our good God sent,
With a trust complete.

We should waste no moments in weak regret
If the day were but one;
If what we remember and what we forget
Went out with the sun;
We should be from our clamorous selves set free
To work and to pray,
And to be what the Father would have us to be,
If we had but a day.

Selected