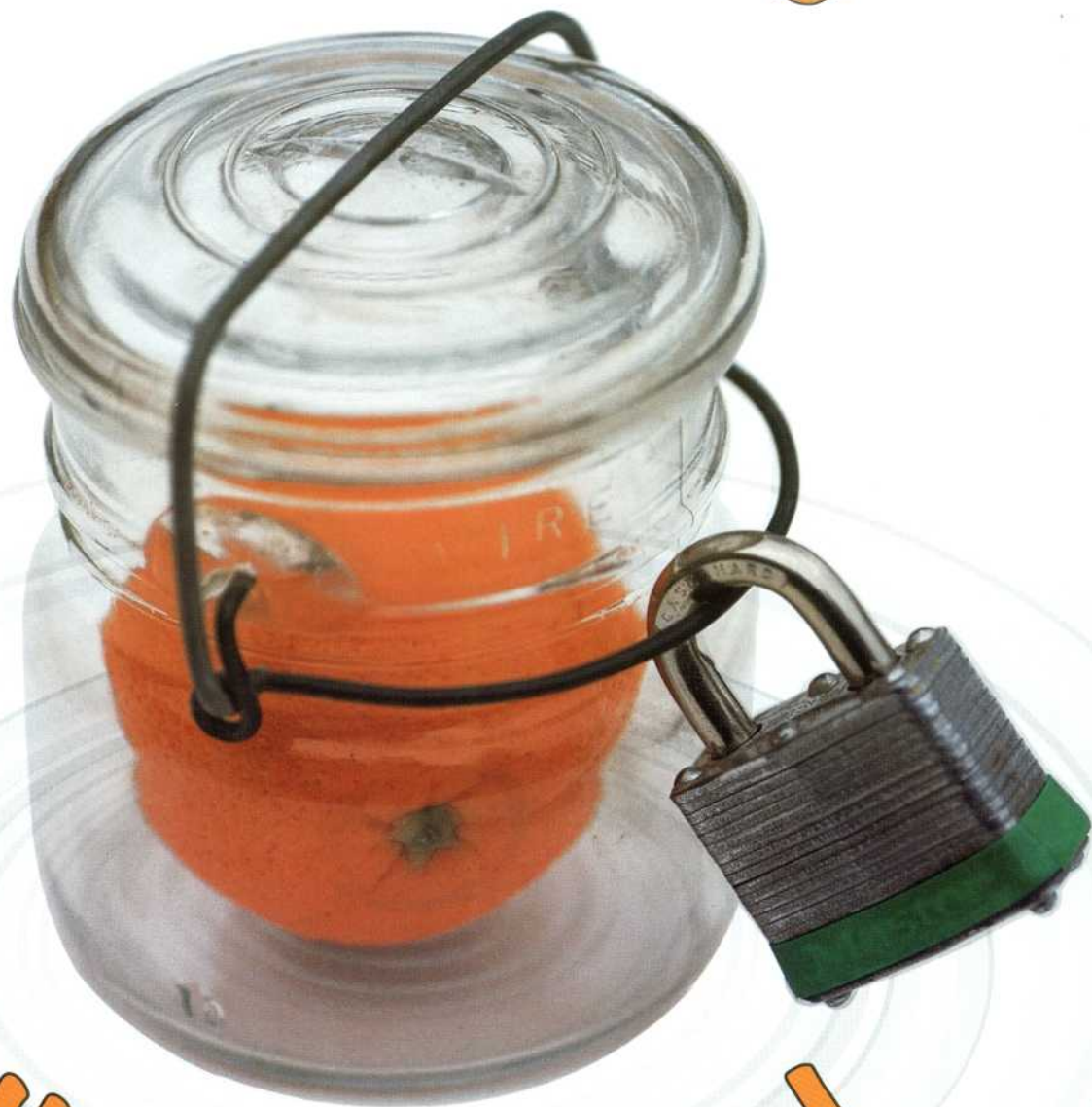


Megiddo Message

Vol. 79, No. 2
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Under Control

Does It Really Matter?

Small issues can be devastating, especially in religion. Nothing is more dangerous than feeling, "What does it matter? What difference does it make?"—as though the issue were too insignificant for consideration. We forget that the consequences are life or death.

The fact is, every deadly pattern of apostasy from the faith has always started with an attitude of indifference to little things, seemingly small issues.

Can we safely shrug off anything as "small" when it concerns our eternal life? Is it our place to second guess God as to what is weighty or significant?

The Bible and the experiences of life offer countless opportunities to do right, to believe and obey. Not partly but wholeheartedly. Not with bland good intentions, but with energy and zeal. We don't want to just read and hear about being righteous, we want to *be* righteous. We don't want to just talk about Jesus, we want to *be like Jesus*.

And this begins with learning. Many think that God will deal with us only according to what we know, but will He? Is ignorance freedom? Then why did Jesus say, "If the blind lead the blind, both shall fall into the ditch"? (Matt. 15:14). Why didn't He say that the *leaders* would fall into the ditch, the others would be saved because they didn't know any better?

No, ignorance alienates from God (Eph. 4:18). Jesus pronounced the blessing upon those who "hear the word of God, and keep it"—learn and do (Luke 11:28).

It is easy to be snared by the "Does it really matter" question because it appeals to human reasoning. We can always justify our own conduct—or misconduct. So could two young Hebrew priests, Nadab and Abihu, when they

offered "strange fire" in the tabernacle—and were immediately smitten dead (Lev. 10:1-2). What they did was only good common sense. It seemed utterly ridiculous to them that there was only *one* right way of offering the sacrifice. It was patently obvious that any kind of fire could be equally effective in burning the offering.

What they failed to recognize was the supreme and inviolate nature of the Word of God. *God meant what He said*, and He applied drastic punishment to expose the nature of their erroneous thinking. To take lightly *any* commandment of God is a serious, *very* serious matter, even when we have logical reasons to digress.

Look at King Saul, when he returned victorious from battle against the Amalekites. God had said not to bring anything back, but Saul reasoned that if he brought just *a few* of the very best animals, and for the purpose of sacrificing them to the Lord, how could God possibly condemn it?

But God who reads the heart knew that Saul's real reason was not the sacrifice to the Lord but the satisfying of his own pride. Saul had a definite command from God, and had no right to put his own interpretation on how that command should be obeyed. He should have done what God said—exactly—nothing more, nothing less. But he did not, and lost the kingdom.

Saul's kindred are still around today. *Does it really matter* whether I do this or that? Does God really care?

At the moment God is silent. But He is keeping a record, and when He acts, His judgments will be felt—worldwide. Then *everyone* will know what He thinks.

What of us? Let us know that whatever the issue, there is no place for disobedience. God means what He says. Exactly.

MM

Megiddo means ...

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

We believe ...

- in God, the Creator 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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Megiddo Message

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The Four Horses

Visitors to the great cathedral in Milan, Italy describe it as a surpassingly beautiful structure. When one enters its nave and looks toward the west, one is confronted by the great west window. This window, said to be the largest church window in the world, appears like a sea of glass mingled with fire. On that window are depicted not the usual scenes from the Old Testament, nor scenes from the Gospels, nor scenes from the Acts of the Apostles and the early Church. Instead it portrays the tremendous imagery of the Apocalypse. There are sounding trumpets and the angel with a rainbow on his head, standing with one foot on the sea and the other on the earth and

swearing by Him who lives forever "that time shall be no more." There is the woman clothed with the sun, and the moon under her feet. Satan is there, bound with a great chain and cast into the bottomless pit. But the one scene and the one figure which dominates all is the white horse and his rider going forth to conquer.

To the majority of the Christian world, even to Bible students, the book of Revelation is an enigma, a colorful and dramatic disclosure of apocalyptic prophecies wide open to human speculation and conjecture. Especially is this true of the opening of the seven seals in chapter six.

Scholars are divided in their approach to interpreting the opening of the seven seals. Some assume that they describe events of *history*; others take them as *allegory*; others, as *drama*; still others, as *prophecy*.

Which is right? Since the opening of the seals is part of the "Revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave unto him, to show unto his servants things which must shortly come to pass" (Rev. 1:1), this immediately rules out any possibility of their being *history*, because they reveal "things which must shortly come to pass," future events. This tells us also that they are not merely drama; hence the only possibility is to study them as *prophecy*.

Let us turn to Revelation 5, where

of the Apocalypse

"Who is worthy to open the book, and to loose the seals thereof?"

we
are
given the
setting for the
opening of the
seven seals:

"And I saw in the right hand of him that sat on the throne a book written within and on the backside, sealed with seven seals. And I saw a strong angel proclaiming with a loud voice, Who is worthy to open the book, and to loose the seals thereof?" (vs. 1-2). The search is on for one who is *worthy* to open and read the book, this "book" in which is written the destiny of the earth and its inhabitants. The person for this most significant task must be *fully qualified*.

To point up the utter inability of any man for the task, a "strong angel" shouts with a loud voice: "Who is worthy to open the book, and to loose the seals thereof?" And the echo returns, "Who...?" for no man was found who could do it. Who has there been in all the history of the world who could be called "worthy" to open the seals?

Caught up in the emotion of the vision, John bursts into tears. "And I wept much, because no man was found worthy to open and to read the book, neither to look thereon" (v. 4).

Yet there *is* one willing, able, and ready. Listen! "And one of the elders saith unto me, Weep not: behold, the Lion of the tribe of Juda, the Root of David, hath prevailed to open the book, and to loose the seven seals thereof" (v. 5). Who is the Lion of the tribe of Juda? It is none other than Jesus Christ. *He* will open the seals.

What is meant by the term "open the seals"? It is to unveil the enigma, to enact or bring into being the events which the sealed book portrays. The Divine forecasts are "sealed" until one arrives who is able to make them happen. This is the work reserved for Christ when He returns as "King of kings and Lord of lords" (Rev. 19:16).

The first four seal visions reveal four riders who ride forth identified by the colors of the horses, a symbol identifying the nature of the work to be done, and a statement of their activity. Says a current writer, "It is doubtful if any symbol in Revelation has provoked more discussion than the four horsemen."

The First Seal:

Christ Takes Command

Of the opening of the first seal we read: "And I heard, as it were the noise of thunder, one of the four beasts saying, Come and see. And I saw, and behold a white horse: and

he that sat on him had a bow; and a crown was given unto him: and he went forth conquering, and to conquer" (Rev. 6:1-2). Notice the combination of symbols: a horse, representing power, and a rider having a bow and a crown. Notice, too, that the horse is "white," symbolic of purity. The bow represents His Divine authority. He has also a "crown"—He is *the King*. And He goes forth "conquering, and to conquer." Here is Christ, armed with unlimited power which nothing and no one can withstand.

When the seals are opened and the mighty Rider goes forth, the rulers of earth will be compelled to



give heed to the law which shall emanate from Jerusalem. Christ will come with mighty power, with which He will subdue and sweep away all iniquity, until the Lord's Prayer shall be fulfilled and God's will be done on earth as it is in heaven.

When Christ returns and stands on Mount Zion with all His saints (Rev. 14:1), the summons shall go forth, "Fear God, and give glory to him; for the hour of his judgment is come" (v. 7). What will be the general reaction? Will the nations of the earth bow to His rule? No. We read of their reaction in Rev. 19:19, "And I saw the beast, and the kings of the earth, and their armies, gathered together to make war against him that sat on the horse, and against his army." This conflict is the subject of the next seal vision: Armageddon.



The Second Seal:

War—the Great Battle of Armageddon

This brings us to the opening of the second seal: "And there went out another horse that was red; and power was given to him that sat thereon to take peace from the earth, and that they should kill one another: and there was given unto him a great sword" (Rev. 6:4). This time the rider is on a red horse, symbolic of war. The chief feature of his activity is that he "has power to take peace from the earth, and that they should kill one another."

With all the turmoil in the world today, where is any peace to take away? Many are crying, "Peace, peace, when there is no peace." And while they are trying to patch

up peace, trouble is everywhere. See the breakdown of morals, the burgeoning crime rates, the terrorism, the violence. "There is no peace, saith my God, unto the wicked" (Isa. 57:21).

But the present distresses are nothing compared to the "time of trouble" that will follow Christ's riding forth conquering and to conquer (Dan. 12:1).

Red is emblematic of war. When Christ returns to take possession of the earth, His rightful heritage, He will have to subdue the nations by force, by His "great sword." Their reaction will be, as in the Parable of the Nobleman who went into a far country and returned, "We will not have this man to reign over us" (Luke 19:14). The new and better order will have to be literally forced upon them. Christ, the Lion of the tribe of Juda, will have to ride forth conquering and to conquer (Rev. 5:5; 6:2). As a result, for the moment He will "take peace from the earth," while iniquity is being removed.



The Third Seal:

Justice with Judgment

God is fair. He never condemns or punishes the righteous with the wicked, and even in the height of His judgments, no innocent will suffer; no good will He harm. We read about the opening of the third seal. "And when he had opened the third seal...I beheld, and lo a black

horse; and he that sat on him had a pair of balances in his hand. And I heard a voice in the midst of the four beasts say, A measure of wheat for a penny, and three measures of barley for a penny; and see thou hurt not the oil and the wine" (Rev. 6:5-6).

Did any warrior of the present century ever ride forth with balances in his hand? Was any warrior for any nation ever more concerned with justice than with destruction and conquest? No. While the rider on the black horse will cause God's judgments to be executed over the entire earth, it will be judgment *with justice*. "In righteousness he doth judge and make war" (Rev. 19:11).

As Christians we are being weighed now by the standard of His Word; and in that momentous Day none will gain the favor of the great King except by obeying the law that will go forth from Jerusalem.



The Fourth Seal:

Death and Destruction

In the conquest and elimination of evil, death is an indispensable agent. How else can the present troublemakers be removed?

And so we come to the opening of the fourth seal: Death. "And when he had opened the fourth seal, I heard the voice of the fourth beast say, Come and see" (Rev. 6:7). As the mighty army sweeps over the

earth, after the rider on the black horse has dispensed justice and judgment, He says, "Come and see" what has happened. "And I looked, and behold a pale horse: and his name that sat on him was Death, and Hell [*hades*, the grave] followed with him" (v. 8). The appearance of the pale horse marks the completion of the cleaning up operation, forcefully removing the incorrigible element that will not submit to the new order. As a result, two thirds will have been cut off. As the prophet Zechariah foretold: "And it shall come to pass, that in all the land, saith the Lord, two parts therein shall be cut off and die; but the third shall be left therein" (Zech. 13:8).

Isaiah also foresaw this day of doom and described it in the following words: "For, behold, the Lord will come with fire, and with his chariots like a whirlwind, to render his anger with fury, and his rebuke with flames of fire. For by fire and by his sword will the Lord plead with all flesh: and the slain of the Lord shall be many" (Isa. 66:15-16). And Jeremiah adds: "The slain of the Lord shall be at that day from one end of the earth even unto the other end of the earth" (Jer. 25:33). There will be much work for the pale horse and its rider.

Our Common Version says that "Power was given him over the fourth part of the earth." The New Catholic Edition reads: "And power was given to him over the *four parts* of the earth." After the opening of the fourth seal, God's judgments will have spread over the four parts of the earth, the "entire" earth, all nations will have been conquered, the Devil bound, and the Millennium will commence.

An Alexander the Great could conquer the then-known world; a Wellington could win at his Waterloo; a Washington could give us the

blessings of liberty. But did any of these conquerors bind the Devil? The evil that is rampant today shows clearly that the Devil—wicked men and women—has never been bound. That is why we read in Rev. 5:3 that no man was able to open the seals, or to accomplish those things which the seals represent. The inspired writer looked down through the ages and saw not a man, not one who could bring lasting peace on earth. Peace will not come until the appearing of Jesus, the Lion of God.

The Fifth Seal:

White Robes for the Saints

The fifth seal tells us of the white robes which will be given to the faithful at the time Christ assumes government of the earth.

Let us read about this fifth seal (Rev. 6:9), "And when he had opened the fifth seal, I saw under the altar the souls of them that were slain for the word of God, and for the testimony which they held." What is the altar? The saving law of God is our altar (Heb. 13:10), our medium of control, which crucifies us to the world and the world to us. The faithful of every age are represented as being under this altar.

How are they described? As "they that were slain for the word of God, and for the testimony which they held." Those seen under the altar were the slain ones; they died to sin. As Paul testified in II Tim. 2:11 and Rom. 6:8-11: "If we be dead with Christ,...we shall also live with him....For in that he died, he died unto sin once: but in that he liveth, he liveth unto God. Likewise reckon ye also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God." Those seen under the altar are beheaded, not literally but they have forsaken their own ways and

thoughts and become armed with the mind of Christ, hence have no head of their own. As such they are worthy of eternal life.

In Rev. 6:10, the saints are represented as saying, "How long, O Lord, holy and true, dost thou not judge and avenge our blood on them that dwell on the earth?" They are weary of seeing sin, iniquity

The inspired writer looked down through the ages and saw not one who could bring lasting peace on earth. Peace will not come until the appearing of Jesus, the Lion of God.

and evil on every side, and long for the day when the earth shall be filled with a righteous people and all evildoers cut off. They are the faithful, the 144,000 seen standing with Christ on Mount Zion.

There is yet another significant detail here. We read that when "white robes were given unto every one of them," "it was said unto them, that they should rest yet for a little season, until their fellow-servants also and their brethren, that should be killed as they were, should be fulfilled" (v. 11). What is the little season during which they must rest, or wait? It is the Millennium, the time allotted for the development of the populace of the Kingdom. We read of this time in Rev. 20:4, where we are told that it is one thousand years long. At the close of this thousand year period God's judgments will once more be visited upon the wicked.

The overcomers were also told to wait *until* "their brethren" should be "killed as they were." The Millennium will be probation day for these "brethren," who will be the faithful subjects of the Kingdom. For they, too, must die to sin. They, too, must crucify the flesh with its affections and lusts, and thus become worthy of being immortal

The language here is highly figurative, as it describes the effects of the great battle of Armageddon upon the powers of earth. Here is another description of the battle of Armageddon as a great "earthquake," or upheaval of the affairs of men. The power of God Almighty will be felt, terminating for all time man's faulty political and social

When God begins His great work upon earth, He will also finish it. No workers of iniquity will be able to hide from His all-discerning presence.

inhabitants of the Kingdom of God. For their sakes God's mercy extends through the thousand years, to give them an opportunity to meet the standard God requires.

The Sixth Seal:

The Effects of the Judgments of God

The sixth seal covers the same time period as the first four seals. It pictures the judgments of God in action. We read in Rev. 6:12-14, "And I beheld when he had opened the sixth seal, and, lo, there was a great earthquake; and the sun became black as sackcloth of hair, and the moon became as blood; and the stars of heaven fell unto the earth, even as a fig tree casteth her untimely figs, when she is shaken of a mighty wind. And the heaven departed as a scroll when it is rolled together; and every mountain and island were moved out of their places."

structures. During this holocaust the "sun," the light of the world's most advanced nations, shall be "black as sackcloth of hair," "as dark as a funeral pall," while the light of the "moon," the intermediate powers of earth, shall become "red as blood," their brilliance reduced. "And the stars," the lesser political entities, shall fall helplessly to the earth "like figs shaken down by a gale." The "sky," the medium in which man has operated these many centuries, will vanish, as a scroll is rolled up; and every mountain and island, those who exalt themselves against God, will be moved from their places.

When God begins His great work upon earth, He will also finish it. No workers of iniquity will be able to hide from His presence.

At long last, man will have reached the end of his rope. All his little projects and seemingly worthy plans will evaporate like dew before the noonday sun.

This brings us to:

The Unveiling of the Inhabitants of the Kingdom, Rulers and Populace

The seventh chapter of Revelation spells out protection for those who are "sealed," and who are they? We read: "And I saw another angel ascending from the east, having the seal of the living God: and he cried with a loud voice,...Hurt not the earth, neither the sea, nor the trees, till we have sealed the servants of our God in their foreheads. And I heard the number of them which were sealed:...an hundred and forty and four thousand of all the tribes of the children of Israel" (Rev. 7:1-4).

Who are these sealed ones? They are the same 144,000 who stand with Christ on Mount Zion (Rev. 14:1). They are the ones in whose mouth was found "no guile: for they are without fault before the throne of God" (Rev. 14:5). They are the overcomers who sing the new song before the opening of the seven seals (Rev. 5:9-10), who shall "reign on the earth." They are the saints who shall live and reign with Christ a thousand years (Rev. 20:4).

What does John see *after* this? He says, "After this I beheld, and, lo, a great multitude, which no man could number, of all nations, and kindreds, and people, and tongues, stood before the throne, and before the Lamb, clothed with white robes, and palms in their hands; and cried with a loud voice, saying, Salvation to our God which sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb" (Rev. 7:9-10).

Here are the blessed populace of the Kingdom. They, too, are clothed in "white robes"; they, too, are pure and spotless. But these are a later generation — these came out *after* Armageddon, after the "great tribulation." And "therefore are they before the throne of God, and serve

him day and night in his temple; and he that sitteth on the throne shall dwell among them. They shall hunger no more, neither thirst any more; neither shall the sun light on them, nor any heat. For the Lamb which is in the midst of the throne shall feed them, and shall lead them unto living fountains of waters; and God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes" (Rev. 7:15-17).

What touching tenderness! What perfect satisfaction! What ecstatic joy!

The Seventh Seal:

Silence in Heaven and the Final Victory

A great crescendo of events has been building steadily since the arrival of the great King a Millennium before. First the rulers were chosen, then the new government was installed; the kingdoms of men were conquered and became the Kingdom of our Lord and His Christ. Then followed the sweet, peaceful years of the Millennium when, with all evil under complete control, with the law of God enforced worldwide, a new generation of mortals could be taught the ways of God and prepare to be part of the eternal Kingdom, to fill the earth with His glory. As century after century rolls by, louder and louder swells the crescendo of God's triumph until—suddenly—there is a brief pause in the music. Silence!

This is the opening of the seventh seal: "And when he had opened the seventh seal, there was silence in heaven about the space of half an hour" (Rev. 8:1).

It is a brief moment during which those who still have evil in their hearts can, for the last time, manifest themselves, to be quickly

and completely swept to destruction. Then death itself shall be destroyed, and Christ, having put every enemy under His feet, shall deliver up the Kingdom to His Father a finished product, and God will be all in all (I Cor. 15:24-28).

In another sublime vision of the Apocalypse, John sees in dramatic picture this glorious time. He writes (chapter 10): "And I saw another mighty angel come down from heaven, clothed with a cloud; and a rainbow was upon his head, and his face was as it were the sun, and his feet as pillars of fire: and he had in his hand a little book open: and he set his right foot upon the sea, and his left foot on the earth, and cried with a loud voice...and swore by him that liveth for ever and ever...that there should be time no longer"; and that when the seventh angel should begin to sound, "the mystery of God should be finished, as he hath declared to his servants the prophets" (Rev. 10:1-7).

Here is the end of time as we know it, the end of the long process of watching and waiting, when the "mystery of God" will be finished, when earth will be annexed to heaven and all that God has planned for mankind will have been

gloriously completed. Here is the point where time shall become eternity, a glorious succession of ages upon ages, world without end, forever! For now "the tabernacle of God is with men, and he will dwell with them, and they shall be his people, and God himself shall be with them, and be their God. And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away. And he that sat upon the throne said, Behold, I make all things new. And he said unto me, Write: for these words are true and faithful" (Rev. 21:3-5).

Oh, blessed promise! Oh, glorious Day!

That Day *will* come when God's plan will be finished, and the earth shall be filled with the glory of God as the waters cover the sea (Num. 14:21; Hab. 2:14).

Our destiny is yet within our own hands, but it will not long remain so. Some day soon it will be too late to change our status with the Eternal.

"Alas, who shall live when God doeth this?" MM

In Canaan

*There is a land of pure delight,
Where saints immortal reign;
Eternal day excludes the night,
And pleasures banish pain.*

*There everlasting spring abides,
And never fading flowers;
Time, like a narrow sea, divides
This heav'nly land from ours.*

*Bright fields beyond the swelling flood
Stand dressed in living green;
So to the Jews fair Canaan stood,
While Jordan rolled between.*

*But timorous mortals start and shrink
To cross the narrow sea;
And linger, trembling on the brink
And fear to launch away.*

*O could we make our doubts remove,
Those gloomy doubts that rise,
And see the Canaan that we love
With faith's illumined eyes:*

*Could we but climb where Moses stood,
And view the landscape o'er,
Not Jordan's stream, nor death's cold flood,
Could keep us from that shore!*

—Selected

Unto the Pure All Things Are

"Unto the pure all things are pure: but unto them that are defiled and unbelieving is nothing pure; but even their mind and conscience is defiled. They profess that they know God; but in works they deny him, being abominable, and disobedient, and unto every good work reprobate."
—Titus 1:15-16

This passage of Paul's has been often misunderstood, even abused. Of one thing we may be sure, that the Apostle does not mean to teach a doctrine of "anything goes!" In fact, such a doctrine and the teaching of moral purity are diametrically opposed. Neither can we take Paul's words to mean that the power of God automatically transforms an individual from sinner to saint, from impure to pure, and that one who has been transformed in this way can do anything whatever and still be pure. Such a conclusion is a contradiction of itself and falls for two reasons: 1) because God does not automatically transform our natures; this task is assigned to us: "Every man that hath this hope in him *purifieth himself*" (1 John 3:3). And 2) Paul pictured the life of the earnest believer as a constant battle between right and wrong, good and evil, spirit and flesh. "For the flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh: and these are contrary the one to the other: so that ye cannot do the things that ye would" (Gal. 5:16-17).

What might Paul have been saying?

In the latter part of Titus 1, Paul was talking to Titus about "many unruly and vain talkers and deceivers," particularly teachers from among the Jews, whose example fell far short of the Gospel and whose teaching was likewise corrupted. Paul's word to Titus was: "Wherefore rebuke them sharply, that they may be sound in the faith" (Titus 1:10-13).

Apparently part of the offense was concerning Jewish dietary regulations, which adherents to the old law wanted repeatedly to impose on Gentile believers. All these extraneous laws of the Jews Paul calls "Jewish fables, and commandments of men, that turn from the truth" (v. 14). They were not of God.

His next comment is the text in question: "Unto the pure all things are pure." Considering the context, Paul may well have been citing Jesus' words in Luke 11:41, where Jesus was by both precept and example teaching this very lesson. A certain Pharisee had invited Jesus to his home for dinner. Jesus went, and we read that—to the shock of the Pharisee—Jesus simply "sat down to meat." Why didn't Jesus first wash Himself according to the ceremonial washings required by Jewish custom? Jesus replied, "You Pharisees are fond of cleaning the outside of your cups and dishes, but inside yourselves you are full of greed and wickedness! Have you no sense? Don't you realize that the one who made the outside is the maker of the inside as well?" (Luke 11:39-40, Phillips Translation). Jesus then made the statement which Paul seems to have quoted: "Rather give alms of such things as ye have; and, behold, all things are clean unto you" (v. 41). In other words, make the inside (the heart) clean, and you will not have to be concerned about ceremonies and rituals.

In this context, Paul's words are meaningful: "Unto the pure [in heart] all things are pure [no need for the outward cleansing rituals of the Jews]." In other words, heart purity does not depend upon, nor is it enhanced by outward ritual observances. The law of God is deeper, weightier, and far more meaningful than any outward ritual. Once the heart is cleansed, outward rituals are superfluous. And on the other side of the question, if the heart is not clean, ritual purifications will never cleanse it. Washing the hands does not cleanse the heart.

Purity is an absolute term, meaning that which is without any contamination. A pure person is one who

seeks purity, righteousness, wholeness in every aspect of his mental and moral life. Purity cannot countenance anything impure, or it would be no longer pure.

On the next higher level we may take from Paul's words another thought: that to the person who is pure in heart, "all things are pure"; that is, to such a one, every command of God, every lesson of life, every event in the Divine providence will only provide more means toward purity.

Paul's words show that he was well acquainted with the totality of the change which the law of Christ requires, the total reorienting of one's taste, affections, and desires. It is a change which affects "all things" which are part of one's life. This is in perfect agreement with what he wrote in his letter to the Corinthians: "Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new" (II Cor. 5:17). To one so changed in heart and mind, "all things are become new" in the same way that "all things are pure." Not that the impure (pleasure, desire) becomes pure, but there has been such a complete change toward purity of heart that nothing remains the same; nothing impure can remain. Where once he lived to please himself, where once he indulged his fleshly appetites, he now seeks purity. Whenever he must make a decision, he decides for the way of purity.

This is what every believer must do. He must demonstrate in every way that he belongs to Christ, that he lives and moves within the power of the Gospel. The first duty of the Christian believer is not to preach but to practice what he knows. For he is not his own, he is not free to do as he pleases. He is only free to be what Christ would have him be.

Purity is the hallmark of the Christian. Said Jesus, "Blessed are the pure in heart: for they shall see God" (Matt. 5:8). Any idea that one can belong to God and profess His standard of purity, and at the same time entertain impure thoughts is false. The command is: Be pure even as Christ was pure (I John 3:3), and this allows no compromise.

Let us look now at the total passage: "Unto the pure all things are pure: but unto them that are defiled and unbelieving is nothing pure; but even their mind and conscience is defiled." Paul is describing two conditions of heart, along with the effects of those conditions. A pure heart produces a pure life, and everything that happens is only a means of making such a heart more holy. A depraved mind will turn every such occasion to a pernicious use, increasing its corruption and impurity. To the pure, everything that happens is an occasion for the Spirit life to grow and mature. To the impure everything is an occasion to the flesh.

The result: a pure heart produces a pure life; while one that is "defiled and unbelieving" produces a defiled life, with even the mind and conscience contaminated.

The word "defiled" means "to stain something another color, to dye." A defiled object is one that has been polluted, caused to rot, or been cheapened in such a way that it is ruined. This is what sin does. Sin marks

P*urity is the hallmark of the Christian. Said Jesus, "Blessed are the pure in heart: for they shall see God."*

us, sin stains our lives, sin corrupts our hearts, sin defiles our conscience, and if allowed to remain it will defeat us eternally.

Paul is voicing a serious warning against the disastrous consequences to which sin will lead. "Even their mind and conscience is defiled." We cannot imagine anything worse than this. Here is the one whose thoughts instinctively turn to evil. The mind contains only garbage. The conscience has become smeared so that nothing convicts, nothing condemns. There is no awareness of God, no sense of His authority, no reverence, no faith—no hope. "They profess that they know God; but in works they deny him, being abominable, and disobedient, and unto every good work reprobate" (Titus 1:16). Such is the dreadful end of those who turn away from purity, who follow the traditions of men rather than the law of God.

But thank God, the conscience can be trained, the mind can be changed. No one starts out "pure." Peter says that we purify our hearts by "obeying the truth" (I Pet. 1:22). A pure mind is an obedient mind, a trained mind, a disciplined mind, one controlled and educated by the law of God, one sensitive to the high standard of Christ, one able to judge between what God calls wrong and what He calls right.

Sin is nothing to be taken lightly. Paul wants us to look upon it as "abominable." There is no word in the English language stronger than this word which Paul used. Isaiah voiced the same thought when speaking for God to apostate Israel He said, "I am sick of your sacrifices....I don't want to see the blood from your offerings. Who wants your sacrifices when you have no

sorrow for your sins?" (Isa. 1:11, TLB).

The greatest tragedy in the world is that of the mind aspiring to purity which gives up, which consents to the defiling and becomes contaminated. Such may say they are Christians, but they are not. They talk like the world, act like the world, have the habits and goals of the world, and love to gratify the fleshly instincts. Of all such Paul says, "Even their minds and their consciences are defiled"—and they feel no shame.

If one is impure in heart, no ordinances of religion, no distinctions of foods, no outward observances of days or events can remove the defilement. Outward distinctions only foster pride and produce self-righteousness. For those corrupt in heart, "even their mind and conscience is defiled." Impurity is much more than an external defilement—it is pollution that contaminates the soul and the conscience. And everything they do tends to corrupt the inner man more and more, and make them more polluted and abominable in the sight of God.

Do we wonder that Paul calls us to absolute purity, and advises us to abhor sin in *any* and *all* of its forms, so that we can escape the end of those who are abominable to God, "disobedient and unto every good work reprobate?"

MM

A pure heart
produces a
pure life.

Is Your Religion Showing?

*People look at our conduct six days
in the week to see what we mean on the seventh.*

A story is told of a Girl Scout leader who was pulled up sharply by the remark of one of her youngest Brownie Scouts. The group had completed a strenuous hike and were resting when the child noticed the leader's medal, which she always wore as a loyal Roman Catholic, hanging outside her uniform. Said the girl, "Your religion is showing."

It is a question we might do well to ask ourselves. What are we doing in our daily affairs that would cause anyone to think or say, "Your religion is showing"?

Our faith ought to show, even more in the example of *living* than in a visible insignia.

There is no such thing as living our faith without its showing in our daily life. Those who saw the apostles "took knowledge of them, that they had been with Jesus" (Acts 4:13).

Example is more forceful than precept. People look at our six days of conduct in the week to see what we mean on the seventh.

A young girl was asked: "Whose preaching brought you to Christ?" "It wasn't anybody's preaching; it was Aunt Mary's practicing," she replied.

True religion shows its influence in every part of our conduct; it is like the sap of a living tree, which penetrates even the furthest boughs.

If we want others to know what our religion can do for them, let them see what it has done for us; for we can preach a better sermon with our lives than with our lips—a sermon, as it were, *without words*.

When we entered the service of the Almighty, it was obvious; our religion was showing. We made rapid progress. We changed from being conformed to the fashions to the modest dress of the Christian. We no longer attended their social gatherings; our speech became less and less punctuated by the slang of the day. Yes, indeed, our religion was showing.

But when it comes to the more tedious work of curbing the wandering thoughts, suppressing the manifestation of unchristian emotions common to man, can it be said, "Your religion is showing"? Do we display patience, meekness, unselfishness, humility, nobleness of speech and action, purity of thought and deed?

Do we still possess that great love we had at the beginning, or has it ceased to stir our enthusiasm?

In our business associations with our brethren or the world, is our religion clearly showing? Can it be said that our dealings are above reproach? From the windows of our personality and conduct, does the Christ-light beam to the dark world around? Are our family, neighbors and community forced to recognize

that we have been with Christ, like those transformed men of the first century? Do we do unto others as we would be done by, or is our greatest concern to drive a shrewd bargain even if perhaps it gives others the opportunity to say, "If he is any sample of the religion he professes, then I am not interested"?

This is a serious question each of us needs to allow to penetrate deep into our consciousness. Paul admonished us, "Be thou an example of the believers in word, in conduct, in charity, in spirit, in faith, in purity" (1 Tim. 4:12).

What is our example before the young? Children are creatures of imitation, and most of their impressions are made by what they see about them. How very important that we set a good example for them to emulate. Especially is it a "must" for parents to set a good example in the home. Said a sage, "Thou canst not rebuke in children what they see practiced in thee. Till reason be ripe, examples direct more than precepts. Such as is *thy* behaviour before thy children's faces; *such is theirs behind thy back!*"

*I'd rather see a sermon,
Than hear one any day.
I'd rather one would walk with me,
Than merely tell the way.
The eye's a better pupil,
And more willing than the ear;
Fine counsel is confusing;
But example's always clear.
The best of all the preachers,
Are men who live their creeds,
For to see good put in action,
Is what everybody needs.
I soon can learn to do it,
If you'll let me see it done,
I can watch your hands in action,
But your tongue too fast may run.
The lectures you deliver,
May be just and right and true;
But I'd rather get my lessons
By observing what you do.*

*I may not learn the precepts
That you are glad to give,
But there'll be no mistaking
How you act and how you live.*

Sometimes the hardest place to have our religion showing is at home; here we have the chance for greatest growth. Here we have many opportunities to warp and bend, give and take, to be patient, considerate, kind and loving. Here we demonstrate most clearly if our religion is really showing.

Our religion must be the moving force in our lives, our lifeblood, our meat and drink. Said John Newton:

"The religion of some people is constrained, like the cold bath when used, not for pleasure but from necessity for health, into which one goes with reluctance, and is glad when able to get out. But religion to the true believer is like water to a fish; it is his element; he lives in it, and could not live out of it."

We who profess that God's Word is our all in all, do we keep our membership badge always displayed?

Is our religion showing?

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Announcing...Abib

This year the members and friends of the Megiddo Church will welcome the beginning of another sacred New Year on the evening of Friday, April 3, and extending through Saturday, April 4, Bible time being measured from "evening to evening" (Lev. 23:32). The ancient Hebrew pattern, according to the law God gave to Moses, was to begin the New Year with the month "Abib," which is the month beginning with the first new moon following the spring equinox (March 20, this year). The first new moon occurs this year on April 3.

This day has double significance as we commemorate the beginning of the sacred year and also the birth of our great coming King.

Distant members and friends, plan now to join us for this sacred season. New Year services and programs will be held on April 3 and 4. The anniversary of the Lord's Supper will be on Wednesday, April 15, and the Resurrection on Saturday, April 18.

Self-Denial Week

The week beginning Sunday, February 2, will be the annual observance of self-denial week for the Megiddo Church congregation and all scattered members and friends who wish to observe it with us.

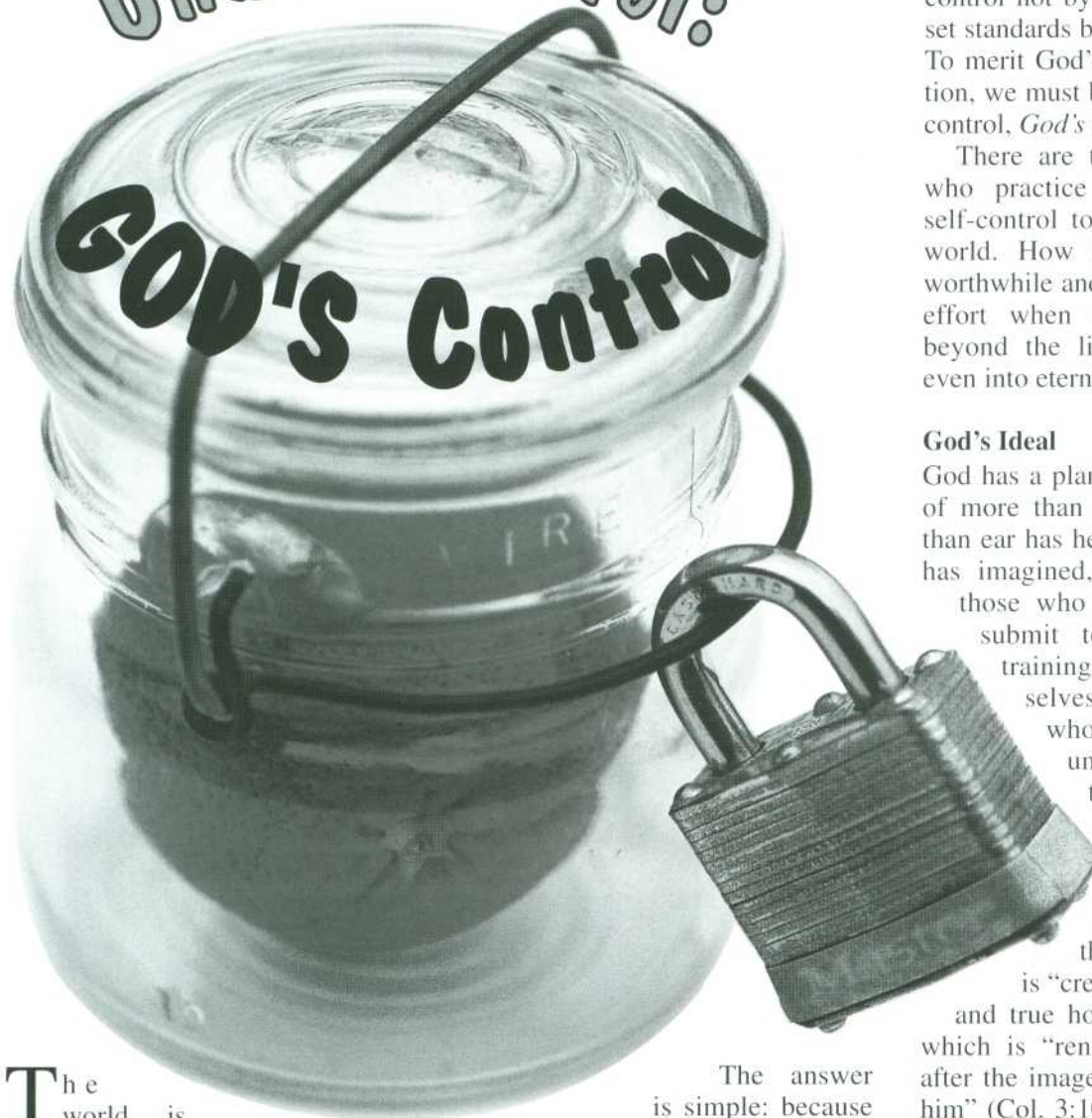
During this week we will limit ourselves to three articles of food at each meal. Selection will be made from simple, plain, common foods, varied each meal as desired. We shall refrain from all specialties, all cookies, pastries, desserts, and fancy foods.

The God-directed life is from beginning to end a life of self-denial, denying ourselves the words we would instinctively speak, the thoughts we would think, the emotions and feelings that would naturally control us.

Let us make this week of self-denial a step toward our greater goal.

Under Control:

GOD'S Control



The world is filled with people who struggle with nature, struggle with machines, struggle with intellectual problems. But how many are they who struggle with themselves? Even more, how many succeed in conquering themselves?

First of all, what is the point? Why make life difficult? Why not take the line of least resistance, go as far as you can to please yourself and get what you naturally want, and find real happiness?

The answer is simple: because satisfying our instincts, pleasing ourselves, does not bring happiness. Nor does it bring any real achievement, even in this world. There is no real success except through struggle; there is no achievement without self-sacrifice and self-control.

And if we are seeking truly long-term goals, goals that reach beyond this life, if we aspire to the highest rewards which only God can give, there must be even

greater struggle, and greater discipline, and greater control. And it must be struggle and discipline and control not by any human- or self-set standards but by *God's* standard. To merit God's honor and recognition, we must bring ourselves under control, *God's* control.

There are thousands of people who practice self-discipline and self-control to attain goals in this world. How immeasurably more worthwhile and more rewarding the effort when one's goal reaches beyond the limits of this world, even into eternity!

God's Ideal

God has a plan, a glorious promise of more than eye has seen, more than ear has heard, more than heart has imagined, but it is only for those who live *His* way, who submit to His program of training and bring themselves to His standard, who place themselves under His control and thus become masters of themselves. For God is looking for a "new creature" (II Cor. 5:17), the "new man" which is "created in righteousness and true holiness" (Eph. 4:24), which is "renewed in knowledge after the image of him that created him" (Col. 3:10). He is looking for the mind so renewed that it is totally transformed (Rom. 12:2), refashioned into His mental and moral likeness. He has no use for the old selfish creature we naturally are. This means there will be conflict and struggle.

When you begin to think about it, the idea of struggling with yourself, of mastering yourself, may seem strange. Are there two selves inside, one that gets mastered and one that does the mastering? The

answer is, Yes. And these two natures are constantly vying with each other for authority. The apostle Paul described it as the "old man" against the "new," or "flesh" against "spirit," the "flesh" representing our natural thoughts and ways, the "spirit" representing the ways and thoughts of God. "Because the carnal mind is enmity against God: for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be" (Rom. 8:7). Again, "The flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh: and these are contrary the one to the other: so that ye cannot do the things that ye would" (Gal. 5:17).

When we decide that we want what God is offering and set out to serve Him, we find very soon that "we" must continually oppose ourselves. We are not what we want to be, and not what God wants us to be. The natural mind says, "This way!" The mind directed by the Spirit says, "No! God's way."

How we would like to be able to say to our old nature "Be gone," and have the new nature take control! If only it were so easy! But the old nature shows itself again and again, in a thousand ways. It shows itself in how we speak, how we think, the comments we make, the attitudes we take, our actions and reactions day after day, from morning to night. Only by constant practice and constant vigilance can we ever overpower it. And even when we think we have it conquered, in an unguarded moment it may rear its ugly head yet again.

We might think of the old nature as being like barnacles on a ship. The barnacles adhere so tightly to the ship that they may actually become a part of it. To get rid of them you actually have to scrape them off. Even then they may return. That is the way with our old nature. It is there, dominant and

controlling, until we forcefully remove it.

We all have it, without exception, though the proportions of its vices vary from one to another. It is selfish, deceitful, stubborn, contrary. It may show itself by a mind set on an idea in spite of evidence to the contrary. It may be thoughts of doubt or discouragement that threaten us. Or it may be a feeling of self-love, self-will, self-pity, or self-gratification. Sometimes it assaults us with feelings of envy or jealousy, a surge of impatience, or a wave of rebellion. Other times it is an attachment, an interest, a captivation, something we see or hear or imagine that fixes itself in our mind, which we refuse to let go. All have one thing in common: that they are enemies of what we really want to be, *ought* to be, *must* be, before God will accept us.

Now what about the other side, that nobler nature that we are seeking to develop? It is opposite in every respect. It is composed of other passions, other desires, compulsions, captivations, enthusiasms, interests, impulses and emotions. At our highest moments we are fired by a love for God and His Kingdom so intense, so compelling that it consumes us. We feel a devouring eagerness to be part of God's coming Kingdom. We feel the surety of it. It is coming, it is real.

When this new nature is dominating, we actually cannot remove our mind from this realm of thought. Whatever we think, or speak, wherever we go, it is there, motivating, controlling. Its emotions of joy and hope and contrition, its impulses of service and obedience and love become the controlling factors of our conscious life.

And so we see our two natures. All our behavior is an expression of one or the other, whichever is in control. When our higher nature is

controlling, our conduct, our thinking, our feelings all reflect the behavior patterns of that higher nature. Likewise when the lower nature is in control, our behavior patterns, our thoughts, our feelings and attitudes will be the reflections of the lower instincts.

This was the struggle the apostle Paul experienced in himself. Hear

Satisfying ourselves
does not bring
real happiness, even
now. Most of all, it
does not give us
anything eternal.

his own personal account of it, as phrased in the Phillips Bible:

"For we know that the Law itself is concerned with the spiritual—it is I who am carnal, and have sold my soul to sin. My own behavior baffles me....I often find that I have the will to do good, but not the power. That is, I don't accomplish the good I set out to do, and the evil I don't really want to do I find I am always doing....It is an agonising situation" (Rom. 7:14–16, 24, Phillips).

It is in our power to decide which nature shall dominate us, the old or the new. But the real solution is not a matter of holding down an impulse or a passion. Rather, it is placing the new nature, with its new desires and aspirations in control. We might call it a *God-control* of our lives. The one who is intensely interested in the Kingdom of God and righteousness will be so

dominated by that interest that every aspect of his life will be controlled by it. It is only when our interest in the Kingdom is not overwhelming—when other competing interests are stronger—that the lower nature asserts itself. If my best self—my Kingdom-bound self—is in full control and I have all my priorities right, the rest of my life will be under God's control.

**All that stands
between us and
the Kingdom is—
alas!—ourselves and
our old selfish nature.**

For with that one interest dominating my life I will be, in the highest sense of the word, *God-controlled*.

This is the ideal Paul described, having ourselves totally under *God's* control, when he wrote: "Whether therefore ye eat, or drink, or whatsoever ye do"—all is to the glory of God (I Cor. 10:31). When we have accomplished this, we are free—free to love God with all our heart, all our soul, all our mind, and all our strength. *All* is under His control. Here is the source of God-control: to be captivated wholly by our desire for what God offers and let *that desire*—not self—become the ruling impulse of our life.

Control By Concern

Another way of looking at our behavior is that we act according to our strongest concerns. We might call it *control by concern*. What we

are most concerned about is what controls us. Our whole life—our passions, desires, conduct, thinking, motives, feelings—are controlled by our concerns.

Take a simple example. Suppose that it is the middle of June, and the weather forecast is for frost. If I am Mr. Average, I register that this is most unusual, but the word goes by and I give it no more thought. But suppose that I have a hundred young tomato plants in my garden. Then the statement immediately becomes a concern.

Everything affects us according to our concerns. If our first concern is to be right in the sight of God, to live in Christ's Kingdom, then we will look at whatever happens in relation to how it will affect our possibilities for a place in that Kingdom. We see everything in the light of this one all-mastering desire. If we are passionately attached to this one concern, everything we do will be judged by the thought, "How will this affect my place in His Kingdom?"

When this concern is dominant, we will be more than self-controlled—we will be *God-controlled*.

But we do not immediately have this primary, dominant concern. We must *grow* in grace, we must *press* toward holiness, we must *develop* this concern by adding steadily to our store of knowledge and faith. And while we are developing this concern, *before* this one interest in God and His kingdom dominates us totally, how do we keep ourselves under control?

Here is where we need the discipline of self-control, the power to conduct ourselves *as though* the higher nature were in full control, so that we can feel or think or act or speak as *it* would have us.

Self-control, in this sense, becomes a sort of interim measure, a means to a greater end. It is a tool

to help us in bringing ourselves into subjection until we are totally God-controlled. And the sooner we master the power of self-control—the sooner we are able to dictate to ourselves what we shall and shall not do, our actions and reactions—the sooner we shall be mastered by our greater passion for life in the Kingdom of God.

Self-Denial

This is why we practice self-denial, even in matters that may seem of little or no consequence. Self-denial lets us know that "we"—not our instincts, not our self-cravings, not our passions—are in control. Self-denial is a Christian duty, and a great aid in "growing" the new nature, though we must never think of it as an end in itself.

In every area of life, those who succeed deny themselves. The serious student of law or medicine or any other field denies himself many social pleasures and diversions, so that he can achieve his goal. The serious athlete undergoes severe self-discipline and denial to excel above his colleagues. Likewise, the serious Christian practices self-denial so that he can more surely command himself in the real areas that concern him, the controlling of his inner thoughts and desires.

It has been said, "He is most powerful who has himself in his own power," and the ability to deny ourselves is the secret of success. By self-denial, by exercising conscious control over our natural instincts, we prove this ability.

"Command thyself," is a good motto; but before you can command yourself, you must know yourself, and learn to say "No" to yourself. This is the preliminary to that greater denial of which Paul wrote to his Christian associates, of denying all "ungodliness and worldly lusts" and living "soberly,

righteously, and godly in this present world" (Titus 2:11-12).

We cannot live under the dominion of the new nature until we have learned effectively to dominate or control the old, lower nature. One of the most common weaknesses is self-indulgence, self-gratification. It may be gratification of an appetite, passion, love of dress, amusement, or whatever, but it springs from the same root, the old nature.

"He that hath no rule over his own spirit is like a city that is broken down, and without walls" (Prov. 25:28). He who has not learned to say "No" to himself is not really a Christian.

The Benefits

In bringing ourselves under God's control we are not losing but gaining; our lives are becoming broader instead of narrower. For, make no mistake about it, the world to come belongs to the men and women who are able to say "no" to themselves on a lower level, so that they may have more with which to say "yes" on the higher.

Our goal as Christians is eventually to become God-controlled, that is, the old nature gone; the old taste entirely changed; the old concerns entirely obliterated. Our goal is to be God-controlled through godly concerns, to reach the point where our tastes are changed so completely that we no longer *want* the things of the flesh. Then we will no longer need self-control because our love for the higher will be dominating.

But in the meantime we must practice self-control. Another word for it is *behavior* control. It is the controlling of the outer aspects of our life, forcing ourselves to comply outwardly, doing what we know we *should* do, until our tastes are fully changed.

A Prayer of Self-denial

Father, you know me better than I know myself. Therefore, I pray:

Help me remember attitudes that are hurtful to my neighbor:

I will deny myself gossip, that I may know the meaning of thoughtfulness;

I will deny myself faultfinding, that I may know the meaning of friendship;

I will deny myself hasty judgments, that I may know the meaning of understanding;

I will deny myself bitterness, that I may know the meaning of joy;

I will deny myself bigotry, that I may know the meaning of brotherhood.

Help me remember attitudes that are hurtful to my family:

I will deny myself anger, that I may know the meaning of self-control;

I will deny myself stinginess, that I may know the meaning of generosity;

I will deny myself pettiness, that I may know the meaning of great-heartedness;

I will deny myself cowardice, that I may know the meaning of courage;

I will deny myself hardness, that I may know the meaning of forgiveness.

Help me remember attitudes that are hurtful to myself:

I will deny myself arrogance, that I may know the meaning of wisdom;

I will deny myself self-centeredness, that I may know the meaning of freedom,

I will deny myself self-righteousness, that I may know the meaning of faith;

I will deny myself despair, that I may know the meaning of hope;

I will deny myself hate, that I may know the meaning of love.

I will deny myself selfishness, that I may know the meaning of godliness.

I will deny myself all things that lead to death, that I may one day know the reality of eternal life. Amen.

Total *God-control* is the successful managing of all our impulses, passions, and desires in view of our higher concerns. It is not merely the suppression of errant behavior but the actual modifying or remaking of the nature which produces the behavior. God wants a "*new heart*" (Ezek. 36:26). He is looking for the "*new creature*: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new." God wants us to be so totally

My own behavior baffles me. For I find myself doing what I really loathe but not doing what I really want to do."

—The Apostle Paul

transformed that we belong to Him heart, and soul, and mind and strength (Mark 12: 30–31).

This is far more than mere behavior control, far more than the mere outward restraining of angry words or harsh feelings.

A criminal confined in a cell has behavior control because it is forced upon him. He may be still a criminal at heart.

A recalcitrant child who against the wish of his parents had been standing up and shouting was sitting quietly, under threat of punishment. When someone complimented him for his changed behavior, the child replied, "On the outside, I'm sitting down, but inside I am still standing up and shouting!"

This is not what God wants. God is looking for the inner change. He wants us remade, all the way through.

The Real Difference

What is the real difference between self-control and God-control?

Let us look at a few examples. Someone has wronged us, and our first instinct is to retaliate. We restrain ourselves, because we know that respectable people do not retaliate, though we wish we could. This is self-control. However, in God's sight we are just as wrong for *feeling* like retaliating as though we had actually done it—because God judges *the heart*, as well as the outward action.

Take the same situation with one who is God-controlled. Someone has wronged him. What is his reaction? He might be tempted to retaliate. But his immediate thought is, How does God want me to feel? What is the *right* thing to do? And then his better self answers, No, I do not want to retaliate. I must leave all judgment to God, and be only concerned that my own feelings are right before God. I know that God has said, "Vengeance is mine, I will repay saith the Lord," and I must not allow any bitterness to rankle in my mind. He has hurt himself far more than he has hurt me, and I only wish that I could help him to see the error of his way.

This is what it means to be God-controlled.

Of course, as Christians we must have our powers of self-control ever ready for immediate use to keep us from doing wrong. And we must keep working until through our genuine love of God and future life we want more than anything else to *do and be right* in the sight of God.

Seen in this light, God-control becomes the greater challenge because it means the actual changing of our feelings and attitudes, getting to the root of our problem. More than *restraining* ourselves it

means *retraining* ourselves, *redirecting* our thoughts, *remaking* the desires that move us to act. To be wholly like Christ we must change our vision, our wants, our concerns. This is the only way to achieve true God-control.

Our founder, Rev. L. T. Nichols, said it in these words: that we must be speaking and thinking and acting the truth so continually that it will become second nature to us. This *second* nature is the God-controlled nature.

As we practice self-control, we are taking steps toward God-control. Self-control is a spiritual muscle, which grows stronger with exercise. Someone has suggested that it is good to do something every day for no other reason than that we would rather not do it. In this way we can be getting ready for greater tests.

It might be as simple as denying our eye the right to look at something to which it is attracted. Refuse the eye its pleasure, and you practice discipline. Again, it may be something we enjoy. Discipline yourself with a view to limiting that satisfaction, and you grow in discipline.

All that stands between us and the Kingdom is—alas!—ourselves and our old selfish nature. The door is open. Christ Himself is inviting us in. How foolish if we hold back, simply because we were not concerned enough with God and the things that last!

Let us make a new effort to be God-controlled, because we want, above all, the honor of God and the hosts of heavenly angels, and to be presented *faultless* before the presence of His glory with exceeding joy and be granted the right to live with all the faithful in that bright new world, world without end. MM

God's Spiritual Creation

Adam and Eve

Our study of the Garden of Eden is incomplete without an understanding of its human inhabitants, Adam and Eve.

The founder of the Megiddo Church, Rev. L. T. Nichols, was educated in the traditional belief that Adam and Eve were the first man and woman to inhabit the earth. His mother, a devoted member of the Disciples of Christ, diligently instilled her religious convictions into the minds of her children. The story is told of the first day when little L. T. was old enough to go to Sunday School. Dressed in his Sunday best, which meant clean homespun, straw hat made at home from hand-plaited rye straw, and barefooted, he was ready to go with his mother to the rude schoolhouse which served as a church on the frontier. But first he had to be coached in his lesson.

"My son," said she, "you must learn this little lesson to say to your teacher. Who was the first man?"

With childish innocence came the ready answer: "Papa."

"No, no, my son," Mother chided, "the teacher will laugh at you. You must say 'Adam'. Now, who was the first woman?"

"Mamma"—hopefully, but not so confident.

"No, you must say, 'Eve.'"

Such was his early education.

Yet slowly, laboriously—triumphantly—he discovered that Genesis is not a record of the literal creation but a projection of the entire plan of salvation.

Were Adam and Eve the first man and woman to inhabit the earth? Science cannot possibly concede that they were. Neither does reason permit us to accept this teaching, time-honored though it be. Even much fundamental religion has quietly discarded this illogical and inconsistent relic of medieval faith.

The term "Adam" is used broadly in Scripture in place of "man." Sometimes it is used to denote the entire human race. For example, in Job 14:1 we read, "Man [literally, Adam] that is born of a woman is of few days, and full of trouble." Again, "Adam" is used of that which is "earthy" or mortal as opposed to that which is "heavenly" or immortal. "And so it is written, The first man Adam was made a living soul; the last Adam was made a quickening spirit....The first man is of the earth, earthy; the second man is the Lord from heaven" (I Cor. 15:45, 47). The Bible does not say that Adam and Eve were the first man and woman. In fact, it does not tell us when or where or who were the first human creatures to inhabit the earth. How

shall we understand Adam and Eve in the light of Scripture?

We must recognize Adam and Eve not only as individuals but—more important—as representing classes of men and women involved in the plan of God. Just as the book of Hosea illustrates the whole body of the children of Israel as "my son" (Hosea 11:1), so Adam and Eve, the first whom God called to serve Him, represent all the covenant-makers. They are the men and women selected out of the vast reservoir of humanity as potential heirs of His future eternal Kingdom.

In their physical situation, Adam and Eve were human beings, just as you and I; subject to sickness and death, just as you and I; subject to temptation and sin, just as you and I. They were singular only in the fact that they were the first on this planet, so far as we have record, to be called to serve God. However, the narrative in the first of Genesis is concerned principally with Adam and Eve in their representative role. From this viewpoint let us study them, to expand our knowledge of God's plan and purpose for this earth.

The Creating Process

The narrative in Genesis 2 begins a second account of creation. First it

describes the earth before God sent His Divine knowledge or called anyone to participate in His eternal purpose. "For the Lord God had not caused it to rain upon the earth, and there was not a man to till the ground" (v. 5). There was no rain, no knowledge of God, no water of life (John 4:14) to cause the earth to bud and bring forth fruit unto holiness.

Then "there went up a mist from the earth, and watered the whole face of the ground"—the water of Divine knowledge watered the dry ground, and God began forming man, a composite man for His new creation. "And the Lord God formed man of the dust of the

The creating process is continuous until the "new man" is fully created in righteousness and true holiness.

ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul" (vs. 6-7). Here is pictured God "forming" or selecting man, Adam, representative of all to whom He gives the opportunity to prepare for immortal life. God gives them the "breath of life," the "spirit of truth," the words which Jesus said can impart life (John 6:63). The man who lives by this breath of life, this spirit, can eventually attain to immortality, eternal life.

The creating process is continuous until the "new man" is fully created in righteousness and true

holiness (Eph. 4:24). It is the forming of men and women into perfect and holy characters, worthy of God's eternal blessing. We must constantly engage in the task of creating ourselves in Christ Jesus unto good works (Eph. 2:10) if we would be fully formed and at Judgment Day become an immortal, living soul.

Next we read in Genesis that God placed this man He is creating in His garden. "The Lord God planted a garden eastward in Eden; and there he put the man whom he had formed" (v. 8). If we recall that the garden of Eden is the "vineyard of the Lord," which is "the house of Israel" (Isa. 5:7), the Lord's field of human endeavor, then we can comprehend Adam as an individual, the first man selected by God to work in this spiritual garden; and Adam is a representative person, illustrating an entire class of men and women who through the ages covenant to serve God.

Within this spiritual garden God provides His servants with everything necessary to support vibrant spiritual health and strength: spiritual food and water, the words of eternal life, fresh from the tree of life and the river of Eden. Then He gives them work and responsibility: "And the Lord God took the man, and put him into the garden of Eden to dress it and to keep it" (v. 15). If faithful to their duties, they shall be permitted to enjoy the fruits of the garden through all eternity. But if, like Solomon, they fail to keep their own vineyard (Song of Sol. 1:6), they shall be cast out of the Garden of God forever.

The Rib of Genesis

Now we come to another symbol: the rib. "And the Lord God caused a deep sleep to fall upon Adam, and he slept; and he took one of his ribs, and closed up the flesh instead thereof; and the rib, which the Lord

God had taken from man, made he a woman, and brought her unto the man. And Adam said, This is now bone of my bones, and flesh of my flesh: she shall be called Woman, because she was taken out of Man. Therefore shall a man leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave unto his wife: and they shall be one flesh" (Gen. 2:21-24).

How foolish indeed to think that God took a rib out of a literal man to make a literal woman! Rational men and women can in no measure subscribe to a literal construction of this passage. Adam's subconscious mind must indeed have been surprisingly alert during that "deep sleep" if, upon awakening, he immediately recognized the woman as bone of his bones!

Upon discarding such incongruous reasoning and seeking a Scriptural definition of the symbols, we find the Almighty to be reiterating the same truth as taught in Genesis 1, that while humanity at large is spiritually asleep, the rib or Church is being created. The Hebrew word *tsela* which is translated "rib" has for some of its definitions: "Used figuratively of the Israelites; beams, as of the ribs of a building; Gen. 2:21-22; I Kings 6:15....The sides of the altar, Ex. 38:7....A side chamber of the temple....used of the whole of that part of the temple, comprising three stories" (Gesenius' Hebrew and English Lexicon). As an example of its use in this figurative sense the lexicographer gives Micah 4, where the Prophet is speaking of the spiritual house of the Lord, which we learn from Hebrews 3:6 and I Corinthians 3:9 is composed of all the faithful, "Christ as a son over his own house; whose house are we...Ye are God's building."

Just as a strong and influential man might be called a "pillar" in his line of business, so faithful men and women form the *tsela* or beams

of the building which God is making out of humanity.

This unusual work of creation is taking place while the world at large is unaware, asleep. Like the other symbols in the allegory, this sleep is not literal but representative of the spiritual darkness which prevails everywhere (Isa. 60:2).

The allegory teaches that when the woman is completed Adam will recognize her, "and shall cleave unto his wife: and they shall be one flesh." This beautiful phase of the narrative is yet to be fulfilled when, at the Judgment, Christ, the second Adam (I Cor. 15:47), claims His Bride. By what means does He recognize her so readily? By her flawless, spotless attire. Of all the throngs at Judgment only she is clad in the wedding garment of righteousness (Rev. 19:7-8). Only she has manifested true fidelity, full allegiance to Christ, the One Husband (II Cor. 11:2). And now her loyalty is rewarded, Christ claims her as His Bride, not for one year, or ten, or fifty years, but for eternity.

In Ephesians 5, Paul borrows the very language of Genesis to describe this future union (vs. 31-32): "For this cause shall a man leave his father and mother, and shall be joined unto his wife, and they two shall be one flesh." And then to rivet beyond question the subject of his discourse, Paul adds, "I speak concerning Christ and the church"

—the second Adam and the rib of Genesis.

Faithful and Unfaithful Adam and Eve

Closer scrutiny of the lives of Adam and Eve will give us further information about God's plan of salvation and, more essentially, the means He employs to attain His ends.

We find, as recorded in Genesis 2 and 3, that God places His people in a garden—a place of development—and it is here, that the duplicity of their nature is revealed. In the allegory we read of a faithful Adam and Eve; then perhaps the next phrase is descriptive of an unfaithful man and woman. True to life—even as we ourselves so often experience—when we would do good, evil is present (Rom. 7:21); the spirit is willing but the flesh is weak. We see these two classes all through the Bible represented as sheep and goats, wheat and tares, vessels of honor and dishonor. The same are symbolized in the allegory by faithful Adam and Eve, and unfaithful Adam and Eve, all composite characters.

We find descriptions of these two men and two women—good and bad, true and false—throughout the Bible. For example:

The good woman is called the Bride, the Lamb's wife (Rev.

19:7-8); the bad woman is identified as "Jezebel," "wickedness," "the strange woman" (Rev. 2:20; 18; Zech. 5:8; Prov. 2:16). The good man is known as the "man of God," or the man "created in right-

All through the Bible, people are represented according to their traits: sheep and goats; wheat and tares, Adam and Eve.

teousness and true holiness" (I Tim. 6:11; Eph. 4:24); the bad man appears as "the man of sin" (II Thess. 2:3-4), also the "old man" (Eph. 4:22; Rom. 6:6; Col. 3:9).

This same unfaithful man, represented in Genesis as Adam, is seen again in Hosea 6:7, "They like men [Adam, margin] have transgressed the covenant: there have they dealt treacherously against me." All who transgress the law of God after they have covenanted to keep it are part of the unfaithful class represented by Adam.

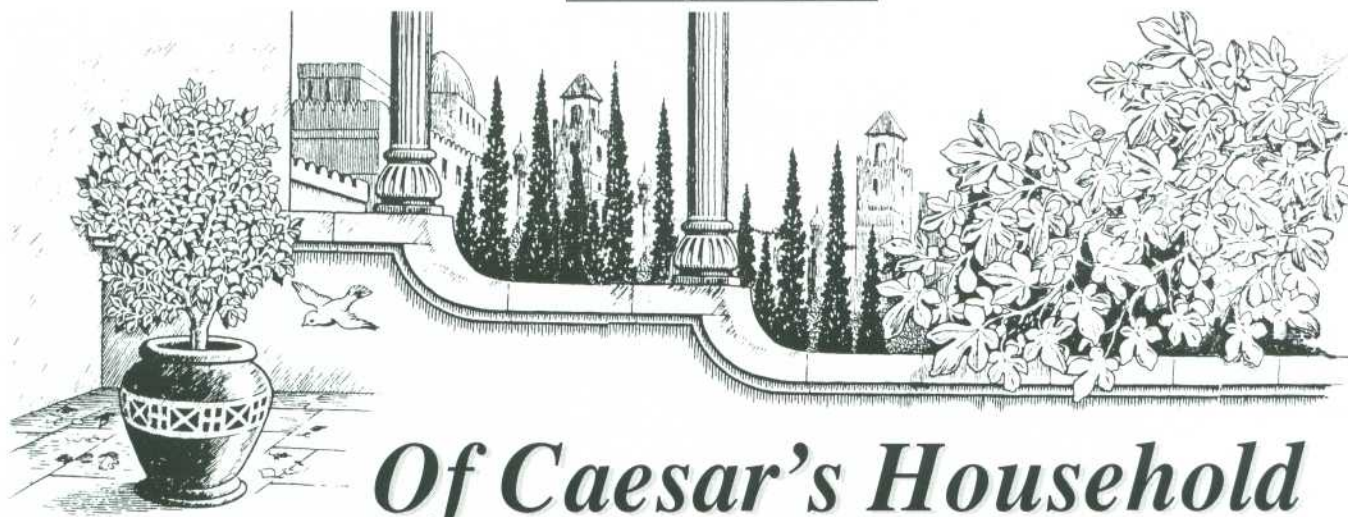
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(To Be Continued)

S*peak, Lord, for Thy servant hears,
Speak peace to my anxious soul,
And help me to feel that all my ways
Are under Thy wise control.*

It is not by seeking more fertile regions, where toil is lighter, circumstances happier, and free from the difficult complications and troublesome people—but by bringing the high courage of a determined heart, clear in principle and aim, to bear upon what is given us, that we make each day a preparation for the Kingdom of God.

If we cannot work out the will of God where God has placed us, then why has He placed us there?



Of Caesar's Household

The Best of This World

From a score of throats the shout rang against the richly frescoed and draped walls of one of the palace's smaller banquet halls. The emperor had just taken his seat at the head of the table, opening one of the small semi-private suppers for officers, favorites and hangers-on, with which not even the thrifty Vespasian could entirely dispense.

A crash of cymbals, and a pair of rich velvet curtains parted, disclosing a small stage on which Hippo's entertainers were to perform. An orchestra of Orientals, left over from Vitellius' reign, was playing soft, weird airs. The imperial cup-bearer entered, and all present rose while Caesar perfunctorily offered a libation to the gods. Then entered a train of slaves bearing food and wine, and the banquet was on.

The talk slid north and south, east and west—the Jewish war, the late chariot races, the favorite gladiators, the proposed new public buildings to replace those destroyed in Nero's great fire, the weather, the food, everything and nothing. Halfway down the table sat a man past middle

age, in the rich uniform of the Praetorians, seemingly ill at ease and unmindful of the small talk around him. And in this case appearances did not lie, for Julius was having a thoroughly miserable time. Never a lover of the great city, tonight it bored him beyond words. It maddened him. He hated every sight and sound and smell of the vast human cesspool; he hated the hollow splendor of the palace and court, its intrigues and petty politics, its horde of slaves, freedmen, and parasites. He even loathed the Praetorian Guard, that pampered and turbulent organization whose armor he wore and in which he was an ornamental officer—the reward of a life of faithful service under the eagles in every quarter of the empire.

Was this success? he asked himself bitterly. Was he to call this happiness? He had reached the top of the ladder, as high as any centurion could hope to go, yet it had not brought him happiness. There was in him tonight, as there had been many times in recent years, a vague apprehension of the future, a rebellion against old age and death. He who had beheld so much violent death, who had defied the grim Reaper on

half a thousand bloody fields, had never yet learned to regard it with calmness and confidence. He loved life as strongly as he hated this city, but he knew also that this artificial existence was not life.

Far better, he reflected, the wild valleys of Gaul, the dark forests of Germany, the mist-drenched downs of Britain, even the burning Syrian sun, with freedom and breathing-space. Better yet the blue seaways of the Mediterranean, with the heaving deck under his feet, the salt spray in his face, and the autumn wind like a whetted knife. There a man was a man, not a maggot among maggots wriggling in the festering tissues of the Mistress of the world.

And yet in his heart he knew that even the old life, to march once more at the head of his century, even to spend his declining years governing some outlandish tribe in Caledonia or Lusitania, would not give him the peace of mind which he craved. When all was said and done, this life at best was only a fleeting shadow. A quick breath, and the best and bravest and wisest of men so quickly and so easily become a heap of carrion. Was there nothing beyond? His mind reached out, groping desper-

ately for a life-line, an assurance of safety, a contact with the Divine.

His faith in the gods of Rome had long since been wiped out by an awakened reason. In his years of travel he had seen enough of creation to convince him that there was a Creator, but was this Creator knowable and approachable? Yes, he did have a little knowledge, but—. For years he had sought for a more pleasing way to arrive at the same end. Oh, for a little courage!

For the thousandth time his thoughts turned back to that memorable cruise from Caesarea to Rome a few years ago. It was routine work, transferring prisoners from Syria to the capital, but certain events of this particular voyage had burned deep into his memory. One of his charges had been a certain Paul of Tarsus, a Jew with Roman citizenship, a learned and eloquent man, at that time a leader of the sect known as Nazarenes or Christians. He remembered well the prisoner's dignified bearing, his freedom from bigotry and bitterness, his unbounded zeal, even in his chains, to spread the story of this strange religion. Many evenings had he sat on the deck beneath the stars while Paul told him of his God, who weighed each action in an even balance, who required no sacrifice but that of self, the Being who inhabits eternity and upholds millions of worlds by His power, yet who hears the cry of His humblest child. The reasoning appealed to Julius, and he more than half believed. At Sidon he had allowed Paul to go ashore to visit his friends, and throughout the voyage had felt constrained to treat him more like a guest than a prisoner; such was his respect for the man.

But the most unforgettable pictures were those of the succeeding weeks of stress and despair, when storm-darkened day succeeded black night until it seemed the very sun had perished; and amidst it all, the

picture of Paul's calmness and serene faith as the crippled ship labored aimlessly up and down on the tortured bosom of the Mediterranean and all hope of rescue was abandoned. He recalled his cheerful countenance and reassuring words that night before the shipwreck, when the galley lay hove to, straining at her anchor cables, with the black water boiling below and the storm shrieking with demoniac fury about them. How calmly that prisoner had moved in and out among them, urging upon them the food which he himself had prepared, assuring them that all would be well, infusing new life and hope into their despairing souls and sending them back, heartened, to their watches. And when the morning reluctantly revealed the gray, heaving waste of water, lashed by a chill, driving rain, and the distant land, the prisoner had virtually taken command of the ship and directed the escape, with the result that not a life was lost.

He remembered, too, the Christian's miracles on Malta, the affair with the viper, the healing of the sick, and many others. He had been almost persuaded; why had he not believed and acted on that belief?

Well, he told himself, Paul's world was not his world; their backgrounds as well as their interests were essentially different. But his more honest self reminded him that this had not always been the case. Paul had told him of his former life, of his high position among his own nation and his utter abomination of this way of salvation, and of what a change he had made, a transformation no less radical than the one he himself would be obliged to undergo should he become a Christian. He had since that time read several of his prisoner's powerful Epistles to the Churches, and had a fair knowledge of the cardinal doctrines of the faith. In the last analysis, he told himself, all he lacked was courage.

For Christianity was highly unpopular, and Julius simply could not bring himself to renounce this world with its pleasures and ambitions and associations that he might find peace in Christ.

So he had gone on, year after year, his better self warring often

Julius simply could not bring himself to renounce this world with its pleasures and ambitions and associations that he might find peace in Christ.

with his Roman pride on the point of taking a stand with the despised Nazarenes but always faltering at the threshold, only to sink back into the old whirlpool of doubts and fears and longings. Tonight the situation was acute. What would he not give for an hour's talk with Paul! What would he not give for courage to cross the line!

As he thus mused, gazing without appetite at the rich viands before him, little did he realize that opposite him sat a man whose thoughts at that moment were as somber and depressed as his own. Flaminus, the powerful legate, with riches, influence, friends, apparently all that heart could wish, had found life as hollow and unsatisfying as had the centurion, and tonight he was in the abyss. He was growing old. Of what avail were his toils, his enterprise, his love of country, his self-denial, his enduring of hardship and privation? What was he the better now that he had marched and watched and bled and preserved whole

Of Caesar's Household

colonies for the Empire, and sat glorious, crowned with laurels, in the triumphal car? He glanced at the rich trappings of the banquet hall and thought of his own palace, which rivaled even Caesar's for magnificence and luxury, thinking the while that even such a home as this might be purchased too dearly at the price of a lifetime. Gold and marble, corridors and columns, ivory couches and Tyrian carpets, were these equivalent compensation for youth's toil and manhood's care, and at last a desolate old age?

He longed for a friend, a true friend to whom he might pour out

**A ray of hope
showed itself;
some day, Julius
would look up a
Christian teacher
and have a heart-to-
heart talk with him.
Some day—.**

his troubled soul, but he knew of none. Flatterers and dependents and fawning parasites he had in abundance, as every rich man in Rome had, but from his lowliest freedman to his brother officers, there was none whom he could trust. Every man, he had learned, had his price.

Had he ever been perfectly happy, he asked himself, even in his hour of greatest glory? Honesty answered, No. For years he had been conscious of a vague longing, something wanting, a sense of insufficiency, insecurity, even discontent. This longing had grown more intense with the passage of time, and as he reviewed the long years in which he had striven to make duty and love of country fill

the void, he was forced to confess that here, too, all was barren. To what purpose was this mysterious thing called life? What was the creative Power, the driving force, the end and consummation of it all? Flaminius, with all his knowledge of philosophy, could not answer his own question, although he felt it must have a solution.

All the Roman knew, all he could realize, was that spring had gone by long ago, with her buds of promise and her laughing morning skies; that the glory of summer had passed away, with its lustrous beauty and its burnished plains, and its deep, dark foliage quivering in the heat; that the blast of autumn had strewn the cold earth now with faded flowers and withered leaves. The heaven was cold and gray, and between him and heaven the bare branches waved and nodded mocking, pointing with spectral fingers to the dull, cheerless sky. Could he but have believed implicitly that there would come another spring, that belief had been to Flaminius the one inestimable treasure for which he would have bartered everything else in the world.

In vain he looked about him for something on which to lean, something out of and superior to himself, something that could inspire him with that sense of being protected for which humanity feels so keen yet so indefinite a desire. What is the bravest and wisest of mankind but a child in the dark, groping for a parental hand to guide its uncertain steps? Where was he to find the ideal which he could honestly worship, or the superiority upon which he could honestly depend? Certainly not in the degraded mythology of Rome, nor in the fairer and more poetic but even more absurd pantheon of Greece, nor yet in the subtleties of philosophy.

Flaminius had served in the East, and he thought now of the nation against whom he had stood in arms,

and against whom even now the might of the Empire was mobilized; brave, fierce soldiers, men instinct with public virtue and patriotism, whose rites, different from those of all other races, were observed with scrupulous fidelity and self-denial. This people, he had heard, worshiped a God of whom there was no material type, on whom they depended when all else failed, and trusting in whom they never feared to die. But they permitted none to partake with them in their advantages; their God was theirs only, by virtue of their nationality, and their faith seemed to inculcate hatred of the stranger, no less than dissensions and strife among themselves.

So these two men, so ill at ease in the festive and now well inebriated company, sat facing each other, each busy with his own thoughts; the one groping after God, the other, after having found Him, cursing himself for his own cowardice in hesitating to accept Him. Presently the atmosphere, heavy with incense, perfume, and the fumes of wine, became sickening to Julius. He rose and bowed to the emperor.

"I am ill," he said; "with Caesar's permission I will go home."

Vespasian nodded his consent and the centurion stole away to seek solitude and the coolness of the night air in the ruined Esquiline gardens, the great park of the illustrious Maecenas, made a wilderness by the great fire. In its moonlit glades, among blackened cypresses and fallen monuments, he continued the unwelcome struggle. A ray of hope showed itself; some day, when he found it convenient, he would look up a Christian teacher and have a heart-to-heart talk with him. He had heard of one, a friend of Paul, a man named Aquila. Some day—.

Soothed somewhat by this indefinite promise, he wended his way homeward.

(To Be Continued)



Serving One's Country

"I have just read your March 1991 issue and agree 100 percent with your article *Christians In A Time Of War*. I was a conscientious objector in World War II, so I know what it is to be calumniated.

"But in said article, you did not mention what a Christian should do concerning noncombatant duties. Do you agree that one is Scripturally justified in such work as 1) driving an ambulance; 2) cleaning rifles; 3) truck driving; or 4) helping in a cookhouse, etc. Your answer will be valued."

The article to which you refer (March 1991 issue) explained why we do not believe that it is right to take the life of a fellow human being: because Jesus said "all they that take the sword shall perish with the sword" (Matt. 26:52).

However, as the article also explained, we do not take a position of non-cooperation when and if our country should participate in acts of war. War under human direction is sometimes a necessary evil.

As far as our individual involvement, we are willing to serve our country, but—if at all possible—not under the supervision of the military. We prefer to work in areas of national importance under civilian direction (forestry, hospitals, civilian duties, etc.). Our nation allows

for this type of service for conscientious objectors, for which we are very grateful. We would not be violating our conscience to serve under military supervision in noncombatant duties such as you mention, but one cannot be sure when he might be summoned to bear arms in that environment, hence we prefer the alternate civilian service duties.

◆ Support the Pro-life Position?

"Thank you for the copy of the synopsis of your beliefs. I do not see anything in it on abortion. Does Megiddo Church support the pro-life position?"

Our Church supports the laws of life, as God set them in motion and planned that they should be respected. In a world under proper management and a proper moral code, abortion would never be an issue; all life would be treated with respect and not abused. We can be sure that after Christ sets up His Kingdom there will be no abortion necessary or allowed.

But in our world today, where lust and sensuality run wild and animal instincts are not restrained, the situation is very different. A morally corrupt society that has abused the laws of God and the basic laws of life as well cannot

function according to God's law, nor benefit from the freedoms which obedience to those laws brings. No part of the present immoral system is as God intended it to be, and God is not to blame for the suffering that results. God did not intend that children be born to parents that transmit disease to their offspring because of their own licentious and lustful living. Nor did God intend that children be born to those who are not able or willing to care for them. Add to all this the problems caused by drug and alcohol addiction, and we have a situation where abortion may actually save suffering. It is not desirable, it is not right, it is not what God intended, but it is part of the corrupt system under man's direction.

Much as we abhor the corruption, we do not take sides in any demonstration movement, because many times the demonstrators are guilty of other types of misconduct. Paul's advice is appropriate: "Be not entangled with the affairs of this life" (II Tim. 2:4). And "Come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing" (II Cor. 6:17).

Much as we would like to solve the world's problems, there is little

that we can do. We cannot hold back the avalanche of evil. Only Christ can stop the avalanche. All that we can do is to live upright and pure ourselves, in this way getting ready for the New Age which will come with Jesus when He returns.

◆ **Enquiring About Christ?**

“Why did John send his disciples to find out about Christ? Didn’t he know who Christ was?”

We can be sure that John did know who Jesus was, and that He was indeed the Messiah. Several statements of John show this fact, one being at Jesus’ first appearance, when He came to be baptized by John. John resisted Jesus, saying, “I have need to be baptized of thee, and comest thou to me?” (Matt. 3:14). John looked to Jesus as his superior.

In John 3, John explains clearly that he was not the Christ—indicating that he knew who *was* the Christ. “Ye yourselves bear me witness, that I said, I am not the Christ, but that I am sent before him” (John 3:28). Certainly he understood his mission, to “prepare the way” for Christ to come, fulfilling the prophecy of Isaiah (Isa. 40:3–4).

Why, then, did John send two of his disciples to Jesus? It seems very likely that John sent them to convince *them*, not him. John wanted them to see and hear firsthand what he himself already knew. He knew that they must ultimately give their loyalty to Jesus, and wanted them to be prepared. He did not want the change to shake their faith or confidence in God or His ministers.

The mission was a success. Jesus sent the disciples back with this message: “The blind receive their sight, and the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, and the deaf hear, the dead are raised up, and the poor have the gospel preached to them” (Matt. 11:5).

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***Failure is the path of
least persistence.***

How BIG Is Our Greatness?

*“Fear not, O land; be glad and rejoice:
for the Lord will do great things” —Joel 2:21*

We have read about many great doings of God. And we are expecting even greater! But are we great enough to witness, more—to participate in—these great events?

“If you cannot do great things do small things in a great way,” reads a familiar motto, and truly we can do that. With peace of mind and patience we can do small things in a great way.

Our God is great and does great things, and so should we according to our possibilities. Our great task is to develop great character for there is nothing truly great in man but character. If we are willing to develop that character, God will give us the power to do it. The pattern we should follow is the Lord Jesus Himself. He is the one who shows us the size of the greatness we are to strive for.

There is a story of a man who had just been elected to the British Parliament. The man brought his family to London and was giving them a tour of the city. When they entered Westminster Abbey, his 8-year-old daughter seemed awe-struck by the size and beauty of that magnificent structure. The proud father, curious about what was going on in her young mind, asked: “And what, my child, might you be thinking about?” She replied: “Daddy, I was just thinking how big you are in our house, but how small you look here.”

If we fix our eyes on Jesus we will never think of ourselves as big enough or great enough, and it will compel us to work harder to grow up to His size.

Let us press forward to the heights of perfection so that God can do great things for us. For only as we live for His glory and show His greatness in all the small affairs of our lives can we have a part in His greatness.

—Contributed

Words are mighty, words have power,
When released, they take on wings;
So let's watch just how we use them,
They can do such dreadful things.

*What happens to us is never tragedy unless we
make it so.*

The best safeguard for the younger generation
is the good example of the older generation.

*Christians have a joy that is independent of
circumstances.*

If you were another person, would you like to be
a friend of yourself?

*Discontent is a secret boasting of some
excellency in ourselves, as if God did not govern
well, or we could govern better.*

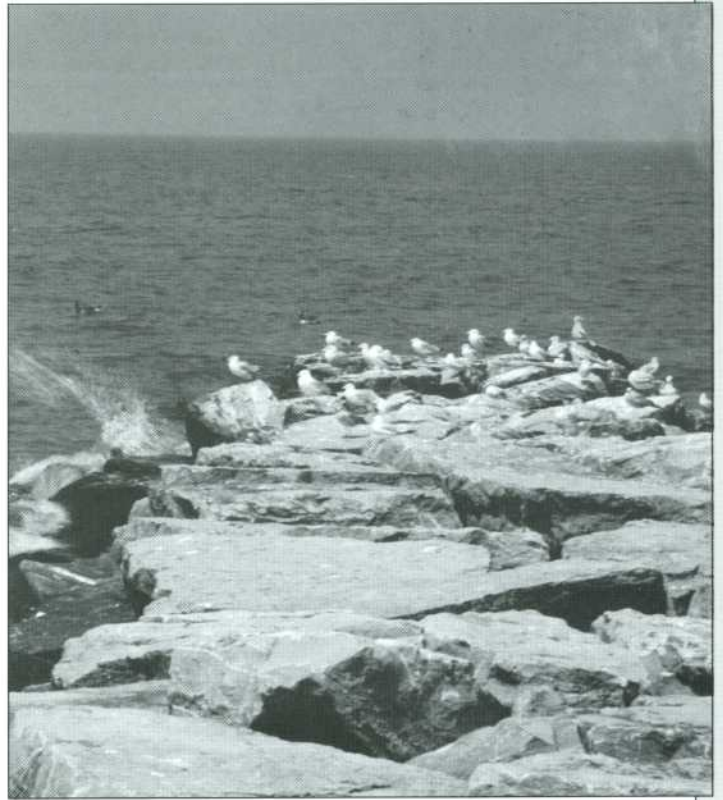
If God writes "Opportunity" on one side of
open doors, He writes "Responsibility" on the
other.

*It isn't enough to say in our hearts
That we like a man for his ways.
It isn't enough that we fill our minds
With paeans of silent praise.*

*Nor is it enough that we honor a man,
As our confidence upward mounts.
It's going right up to the man himself
And telling him so, that counts.*

*If a man does a work you really admire,
Don't leave a kind word unsaid
In fear that to do so might make him vain,
And cause him to "lose his head."*

*But reach out your hand and tell him, "Well
done!"
And let your own gratitude swell.
It isn't the flowers we strew on the grave,
It's the words to the living that tell.*



*We kneel how weak, we rise how full of power.
Why therefore should we do ourselves this wrong,
Or others—that we are not always strong,
That we are ever overborne with care,
That we should ever weak or heartless be,
Anxious or troubled, when with us is prayer;
And joy and strength and courage are with Thee?*

We can sanctify any duty of life by a habit of fellowship with God. Here is the spring of all our life, and the strength of it. Prayer, meditation, and conversing with God refresh, restore, and renew the temper of our minds, at all times, in all situations, in all conflicts. And as our day, so will be our strength. Without this Divine refreshment, the events of life may chafe our temper, lower our tone of mind, and we become fretful, irritable, and impatient. Guard well against all these.

Who is Looking for the King?

Who is looking for the Kingdom?

Who is looking for the King?

Who is looking for His coming

With His regal garments on?

Who is ready to receive Him?

Who'll go forth their Lord to meet?

Who'll be changed to life immortal,

Spread their off'rings at His feet?

Who will enter the fair City,

Pick the fruit from life's fair tree;

See the Saviour in His beauty,

Sing the song of jubilee?

Who will raise their voices singing,

"Thou hast made us kings and priests,

And from sin Thou hast redeemed us,

We shall reign upon the earth"?

Reign with Christ! sweet blest vocation,

Free from sorrow, toil, and pain;

Should we lose the earth's possessions,

Lasting treasures we shall gain.

Christian, is not this sufficient?

Can we linger on the plain?

Haste thee! up! bind on the armor!

Jesus comes on earth to reign!

—Contributed (EDN)